89-03544/

The cover graphic is based on an ancient Egyptian hieroglyph representing the all-seeing eye of the powerful sky god, Horus. Segments of this "eye in the sky" became hieroglyphic signs for measuring fractions in ancient Egypt. Intriguingly, however, the sum of the physical segments adds up to only 63/64 and, thus, never reaches the equivalent of the whole, or perfection. Similarly, verification is unlikely to be perfect.

Today, a core element in the multilateral arms control verification process is likely to be the unintrusive "eye in the sky," or space-based remote sensing system. These space-based techniques will have to be supplemented by a package of other methods of verification such as airborne and ground-based sensors as well as some form of on-site inspection and observations. All these physical techniques add together, just as the fractions of the eye of Horus do, to form the "eye" of verification. Physical verification, however, will not necessarily be conclusive and there is likely to remain a degree of uncertainty in the process. Adequate and effective verification, therefore, will still require the additional, non-physical, element of judgement, represented by the unseen fraction of the eye of Horus.

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Ministère des Affaires extérieures
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Ottawa (Ontario)
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Department of External Affairs
Cat. No. E54-8/2-1989E
ISBN 0-662-16769-4
ISSN 0840-772X

# Verification of a Central American Peace Accord

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**The Arms Control and Disarmament Division, Department of External Affairs**

**Ottawa, Ontario, Canada**

**Canadian Cataloguing in Publication Data**

Klepak, H.P. (Hal P.)

Verification of a Central American peace accord

(Arms control verification occasional papers; no. 2)
Issued also in French under title: Vérification d'un accord de paix en Amérique centrale.
Bibliography: p.
ISBN 0-662-16769-4
DSS cat. no. E54-8/2/1989E

1. Arms control -- Verification. 2. Central America--
Strategic aspects. 3. Central America -- Foreign relations -- Canada.
I. Canada. Arms Control and Disarmament Division
II. Title. III. Series

JX1974.K53 1989 327.1'74'09728 C89-097043-2

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## *Abstract*

This paper discusses the background to, possible contexts of, and likely difficulties with, an eventual Central American peace accord particularly its verification. It begins with a brief analysis of the political, military and diplomatic background of the regional crisis, setting the scene for a look at the verification aspects of the peace negotiations and agreements to date: Contadora, Esquipulas II, and Sapoá. It then attempts to show what kind of further agreement one might see in the future, doing this by examining both "minimum" and "maximum" content possibilities. This is followed by a lengthy discussion of the verification implications of such agreements and the political, geographical, social and technical difficulties they might pose.

## *Résumé*

Le présent mémoire traite des antécédents d'un éventuel accord de paix en Amérique centrale, des contextes possibles d'un tel accord et des difficultés qu'il pourrait présenter, surtout en ce qui concerne sa vérification. Le document commence par une brève analyse de la situation politique, militaire et diplomatique entourant la crise régionale, afin de préparer le lecteur à la partie suivante où sont examinés les aspects liés à la vérification qui sont intervenus dans les négociations antérieures et dans les accords de paix conclus jusqu'à présent, soit ceux de Contadora, d'Esquipulas II et de Sapoá. Le mémoire décrit ensuite les autres accords qui pourraient suivre, des points de vue de leur «contenu minimal» et de leur «contenu maximal». Le document expose ensuite dans le détail tout ce que peut comporter, dans ces accords, la question de la vérification, en expliquant les difficultés d'ordre technique, social, géographique et politique.

## *Resumen*

Este trabajo estudia los antecedentes, posibles contextos y probables dificultades que suscitaría un eventual tratado de paz en América Central, particularmente en lo que se refiere a su verificación. Comienza con un breve análisis sobre los antecedentes políticos, militares y diplomáticos de la crisis regional, estableciendo el marco que permita observar la verificación de las negociaciones y acuerdos de paz estatuidos hasta la fecha: Contadora, Esuípulas II y Sapoá. A continuación intenta mostrar el tipo de acuerdos que se podrían concebir en el futuro, haciendo ésto mediante el examen de las posibilidades de contenido "minimo" y "máximo". Sigue una larga discusión sobre las implicaciones de las verificaciones de tales acuerdos y las dificultades políticas, geográficas, sociales y técnicas que presentan.

# *Preface*

This study, initiated in November, 1987, resulted from a variety of factors coming together in previous months at both a political and an institutional level. Politically, the apparent breakthrough in the Central American crisis in Guatemala on 7 August 1987, where the Esquipulas II agreement was signed by all five Central American presidents, seemed finally to signal the beginning of a peaceful resolution of conflicts in the area. The draft Contadora Act, an even less ambitious agreement, had already implied the requirement for extensive verification of what two experts had called "the most comprehensive multilateral regional arms control document ever submitted for international consideration."[1] The Esquipulas agreement would be even more demanding and it soon became clear that there was a distinct lack of understanding about what such verification requirements, and their implications, might be.

Canadian backing for the Contadora process had been constant and at a high political level. The same day as the signing of Esquipulas II, the Secretary of State for External Affairs expressed Canada's support for it. Ottawa's desire to help the peace process along had been obvious for some time and Esquipulas II sparked new hope after the slowing down of the Contadora initiatives in 1986. It was clear Canada would wish to be at least equally active in this new phase of the peace process and our offers of help were greeted warmly by all the Central American states. The probability of a considerable Canadian role was great if the peace process advanced and interest in the implications of this role grew.

Meanwhile the Verification Research Unit (VRU) of the Department of External Affairs had been active in setting up a program of research on the verification of arms control agreements and the problems therewith. A series of publications has resulted, including ones with a focus on Third World regional arms control. The VRU hoped to draw on experience developed with respect to other regions of the world to address issues in Central Europe, which is the area of most direct interest to Canada.

While originating from somewhat different interests, this paper addresses the requirements and potential problems of implementing the verification provisions of a Central American peace accord, most likely the Esquipulas II agreement itself and some further arrangement following up on it.

# *Acknowledgements*

The preparation of a paper of this kind by an academic in government service is a complicated process requiring flexibility and support by superiors and interested agencies. In this context I should like first to thank the Verification Research Unit of the Department of External Affairs, especially Ron Cleminson, Gordon Vachon and Alan Crawford, for their support of, and patience with, this research. Mrs. Dorise Nina of the Research Unit also warrants much thanks for typing of the corrections to the manuscript.

Equally important has been the ever-flexible stance of my superiors at Collège militaire royal de Saint-Jean, Principal Jacques Castonguay and Major Claude Bergeron, and the wry sense of humour of the Dean of Research, Dr. Paul-Émile Girard.

Suzanne Lagrois of the Department of Strategic Studies at CMR, provided as always the cheerful secretarial assistance without which this paper would not have seen the light of day. Its contents benefitted from the help of three research assistants: Officer-Cadet Henri Legros, Mr. Pierre Bouchard and Mr. William George. To all the above, and to sources of inspirations like Egdar Dosman, Tim Draimia, David Haglund, and Liisa North, my sincere thanks.

# *List of Abbreviations*

| | |
|---|---|
| **CBM** | Confidence-building measures |
| **CCSBMDE** | Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe |
| **CIIPS** | Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security |
| **CIVS** | International Verification and Follow-Up Commission (CIVS after its Spanish acronym) |
| **COIN** | Counter-insurgency |
| **CSCE** | Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe |
| **EEC** | European Economic Community |
| **FMLN** | Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional |
| **FSLN** | Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional |
| **OAS** | Organization of American States |
| **PAH** | Pan-American Highway |
| **UN** | United Nations |

# Introduction

In attempting to address the very complex subject of the verification of a peace accord with extensive arms control and other verifiable provisions, this paper begins with short introductions to the political, military and diplomatic contexts of the region, followed by an overview of the accords signed to date. Specifically, it focuses on the three major negotiations undertaken so far: Contadora, Esquipulas II, and the Nicaraguan national peace accord, the Sapoá agreements, of March 1988.

With the above as background, the paper then looks at the minimum content required for a peace accord of perhaps greater viability than Esquipulas II. Following this, it considers a maximum content agreement, both minimum and maximum taken in terms of what they would set out to achieve as accords. The "gradualist" school of thought on the subject is then briefly addressed.

With the current (minimalist) and potential (maximalist) contents assessed, a framework is provided for analysis of the verification of the agreements in question. Here again, the focus is on minimalist and maximalist accords. This section ends with a wider discussion of other potential confidence-building measures which might supplement an agreement.

The difficulties of implementation provide the subject of the next section. Such difficulties are addressed under the general headings of terrain and climate factors, political complexities, and technical difficulties.

The study ends with a "lessons learned" section and conclusion. It is hoped this approach will provide a study of value both to the specialist and to a wider audience concerned with the Central American peace process and the potential Canadian role therein.

# The Political Background

The area made up of the five Central American republics of today has been the focus of relatively little international interest or activity up to the present. The absence of large Indian populations or of valuable minerals meant minimal concern on the part of imperial Spain for a region all of which Madrid lumped together under the Captaincy-General of Guatemala. The isthmus of Panama, considered important for strategic reasons even in colonial times, was attached to the much more significant South American colony of New Granada.

This backwater of the empire took little part in the growing movement for independence at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries. Indeed, its conservative local oligarchies were only moved to declare independence in 1821 when a new liberal government in Madrid posed the threat of reform to their entrenched interests. Independence therefore changed the social structure of the region very little and only added to the life of the majority further years of conflict and misery. For decades local "caudillos," or military strong men, were the rule as far as government was concerned and political parties were really little more than the personal coteries of prominent oligarchs or military bosses.

Modernization came only as Central America was incorporated into the international division of labour in the last two decades of the last century and in the years before the First World War. The region became the furnisher of a very short list of primary commodities, particularly coffee and bananas, to Europe and increasingly to the United States. Specialization in these crops led to further concentration of land in the hands of the oligarchy or large foreign business interests. Best known of these was the infamous United Fruit Company of the United States. Soon the importance of such firms to the local economy, and to the power of the oligarchies, made them virtual rulers in the land. United States military interventions followed in the wake of large-scale investments as Central America became a distinct sphere of influence of that country. Such was the influence of Washington and American companies by the First World War that the derisive term "banana republic" was coined, first for Honduras and then for all five of the area's nations, as an expression of their dependence on the United States.

The two world wars, the Great Depression, the increasing strength of the United States, and the declining power of the European countries all combined to end any chance of real independence as by the 1930s there was no longer a potential counterpoise to United States influence in the region. This dependent relationship has continued until the present despite a variety of attempts to break out, and has been re-inforced in the post-World War II period by adding to the Monroe Doctrine the Rio Pact of 1947, the Charter of the Organization of American States (OAS) of 1948, and a long series of other security arrangements, usually of a bilateral nature, between Washington and the Central American states.

In the mid-to-late 1970s the decreasingly favourable terms of trade for the agricultural products of the five republics, the end of the successful experiment of

**Table 1**

**Chronology of Key Events: Recent Central American History**

**1962-1988**

| | |
|---|---|
| | **1962** |
| | • Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN) founded by Carlos Fonseca Amador. |
| | **1969** |
| | • War between Honduras and El Salvador. |
| | **1978** |
| | • Widening of the Nicaraguan civil war. |
| | **1979** |
| | • FSLN victory in civil war produces a leftist regime with strong representation from moderate sectors of the population. |
| | **1981** |
| January | • Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN) "Final offensive" in Salvadorean civil war. Result is a failure for the guerillas. |
| September | • Honduras, Nicaragua and the United States receive a joint peace proposal from Mexico and France. |
| | **1983** |
| January | • Contadora Group formed at meeting of foreign ministers of Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela. Aims at finding a negotiated resolution of Central American conflicts. |
| 17 July | • Declaration of Cancun. Contadora Group calls for the international community to help the peace process in Central America and invites President Reagan and Fidel Castro to associate themselves with the negotiations. |
| September | • Bogota meeting between Salvadorean government and insurgents. |
| 7-9 September | • Document of Objectives of Contadora signed by Central American States as well as four Contadora members. |
| 21 September | • Ratification by the Central American governments of the 21 points included in the Document of Objectives. |
| | **1984** |
| May | • Election of Christian Democratic candidate Napoleon Duarte to the presidency of El Salvador. |
| June | • Draft Contadora Act received with favour by Central American States. |
| June | • Manzanillo negotiations between Nicaragua and United States. |
| July | • Constituent assembly elected in Guatemala. |
| September | • Foreign ministers of the EEC, the Contadora Group and the Central American States,Spain and Portugal, meet for the first time in San José, Costa Rica. |
| October / November | • Meetings between Salvadorean government and guerilla representatives. |
| November | • Presidential and legislative elections in Nicaragua. |
| | **1985** |
| January | • U.S. withdraws from Manzanillo dialogue with Nicaragua. |
| May | • U.S. commercial embargo on Nicaragua. |
| July | • Contadora Support Group set up in Lima by Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay. |
| August | • Cartagena communiqué of Contadora and its support group emphasizes the requirements for peace in the Central American region. |
| September | • Bogota meeting between Salvadorean government and insurgents. |
| November | • Second EEC-Central America-Contadora meeting also attended by foreign ministers of Spain and Portugal. |

Table 1 continued

| | |
|---|---|
| November | • José Azcona Hoyo elected president of Honduras (candidate for the Liberal Party). |
| December | • Vinicio Cerezo, a Christian Democrat, elected president of Guatemala. |
| | **1986** |
| January | • Caraballeda Statement reflects increased Contadora and Support Group efforts for peace, security and democracy in the region. |
| May | • First Central American Summit (Esquipulas I) of five presidents. Declaration of Esquipulas. Well received by major interested international groups. |
| June | • International Court of Justice finds in favour of Nicaragua and against the United States in the case of the latter's hostile acts. |
| November | • Irangate scandal erupts. |
| December | • United Nations condemns U.S. embargo on, and military activities against, Nicaragua. |
| | **1987** |
| January/ February | • UN and OAS secretaries-general begin a peace mission in Central America. |
| February | • Third EEC-Contadora-Central American foreign ministers' conference. |
| February | • Four other Central American presidents meet in the absence of Nicaragua's Ortega who was not invited. The Arias peace plan is presented by the Costa Rican president. |
| August | • Second summit of all five presidents. Signature of Esquipulas II, or the Guatemalan Accord, entitled Procedure for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America. Constitution of an international commission of verification and follow-up (CIVS) for the accord. It includes 13 foreign ministers (Contadora, Contadora Support, and five Central American), plus the OAS Secretary-General and a United Nations representative |
| October | • Lifting of a series of press control measures in Nicaragua. |
| October | • Treaty approved to set up a Central American parliament. |
| October | • Salvadorean government and insurgents meet through mediation of Mgr Arturo Rivera y Damas. |
| October | • Guatemalan government and insurgents have discussions in Madrid. |
| November | • Activities related to Esquipulas II in all five countries. |
| December | • Two sets of indirect talks between FSLN and Contras occur in Santo Domingo. |
| | **1988** |
| January | • CIVS inspection tour of Central America. Reports on 12 January. |
| 15-16 January | • Esquipulas III. While re-affirming Esquipulas II, the Central American presidents abolish the CIVS. |
| January-February | • First two sets of direct FSLN-Contra talks. |
| 28 Feb-1 March | • Fourth EEC-Central America-Contadora meeting in Hamburg. Support by EEC for Central American recovery plan. |
| March | • Sapoá accord between FSLN government and Contras. Cease-fire in Nicaragua to begin. |
| June | • Difficulties in further FSLN-Contra discussions. Cease-fire holds despite some minor violations. |

the Central American Common Market caused largely by the Honduran-Salvadorean "soccer war" of 1969, government corruption and repression, and the winding down of the Alliance for Progress, all helped spawn revolutionary movements throughout the region, even if only to a small extent in Honduras and an even lesser degree in Costa Rica. Encouraged by Fidel Castro's revolutionary government in Cuba, and by increasingly ham-fisted repression by the military and police, these movements reflected growing social and economic demands and were therefore strengthened in the late 1970s. In 1979, the astoundingly corrupt regime of the Somoza family in Nicaragua was overthrown by a wide range of political groupings under the leadership of the socialist Frente Sandinista de Liberación Nacional (FSLN). By that year, there were full scale insurrections in El Salvador and Guatemala.

These two latter insurrections have continued over the last decade with varying degrees of success. In Nicaragua as well, a new war broke out in the early 1980s as exiled Somoza officers, alongside increasing numbers of political refugees, organized forces in Honduras and then Costa Rica with the aim of overthrowing the FSLN regime. Funded largely by public and private agencies in the United States, these counter-revolutionary ("contra") forces never established a "home-grown" insurgency in Nicaragua but have been able to carry the war into the country from safe sanctuaries outside, particularly in Honduras.

The actors present at the moment on the political stage in Central America include five governments and three groupings of insurgents. In Costa Rica, a long-standing civilian democracy struggles with a host of social and economic difficulties but has so far weathered the storm. Guatemala's fledgling democracy has made some significant strides forward since President Vinicio Cerezo was elected in 1985. His margin of manoeuvre, however, is severely circumscribed by a conservative national army which has definite views on negotiations with the insurgents, Guatemala-Nicaraguan relations, the Central American peace process and domestic reforms. No observers doubt that if a conflict of sufficient seriousness occurred between the civilian government and the army, the latter would simply remove and replace the former. Honduras, which has known no real insurgency in decades, nonetheless presents some similarities on these points. There, President José Azcona, elected in 1985, is also obliged to accept that his freedom of movement is limited. On issues of foreign policy, internal security, the United States presence in the country, foreign aid, the contras and certain key reform matters, what the army wants the army gets. Napoleon Duarte's elected government of 1982 in El Salvador is even more dependent on the army than are its neighbours. The strength of the Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN) ensures this dependency, as does the desperate need for at least a façade of unity in order to encourage vital United States assistance. Lastly, in Nicaragua, only the revolutionary nature of the government, the special position of the Ortega brothers as head of government and head of army, and the virtual identification of the national army with the FSLN, ensure that the military voice is somewhat muffled. Even there, if the army is unhappy about a major issue, the government would be forced to take notice.

# The Military Background

A discussion of political history leads to an analysis of the military background of the region and the current insurgencies since, despite steps towards democratization in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, the army remains "a," if not "the," key actor on the political scene where matters of vital interest are concerned. The Central American military tradition is, unfortunately, one of political intervention, willingness to serve as a tool of repression, and a growing specialization in modern internal security and counter-insurgency.

With the "caudillo" tradition of the 19th and early 20th centuries, the armed forces were usually vital to the political power of contending politicians, parties and groupings. By World War I most of the armies of the region had begun to modernize and develop some degree of professionalism. Nonetheless, as the normal monopolizers of the military strength of states that had little modern structure, they tended to form alliances with local oligarchies. In return for privileges they gave protection to the oligarchies from any form of social unrest.

Largely European training missions before World War II were followed by those of the United States during and after, that conflict. With the establishment of a modern security arrangement for the hemisphere (save Canada) at Rio in 1947 and Bogota (the OAS Charter) in 1948, the armed forces became better equipped and more professional, and they developed a strong sense of corporate identity. During the Korean War and afterwards, the United States pressed for guaranteed access to strategic materials and important agricultural products in order to better confront the Cold War. In return it offered military assistance to the armies of the region, which it saw in the role of assuring the stability of such access.

When the Cold War arrived in the region in 1954, the United States moved quickly. The Guatemalan reformist government of Jacobo Arbenz was overthrown that year after being accused of being under communist influence. Seven years later in 1961, a similar attempt to topple the much more radical regime of Fidel Castro failed and Cuba's role in supporting revolutionary movements in Central America has continued since the following year, although with varying degrees of intensity.

*Table 2*

**Growth of Central American Forces**

| | 1970-71 | 72-73 | 73-74 | 74-75 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **EL SALVADOR** | | | | |
| Population (millions) | 3.5 | 3.8 | 3.9 | 3.9 |
| Total Strength | 5 630 | 5 630 | 5 630 | 5 130 |
| Army | 4 500 | 4 500 | 4 500 | 4 000 |
| Air Force | 1 000 | 1 000 | 1 000 | 1 000 |
| Navy | 130 | 130 | 130 | 130 |
| Tanks | ? | ? | ? | ? |
| Combat Aircraft | 12 | 14 | 10 | 14 |
| Transport Aircraft | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Combat Helos | – | – | – | 1 |
| Transport Helos | – | – | – | – |
| Naval Patrol Craft | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| **GUATEMALA** | | | | |
| Population (millions) | 5.2 | 5.5 | 5.7 | 5.7 |
| Total Strength | 9 000 | 13 200 | 11 200 | 11 200 |
| Army | 7 800 | 12 000 | 10 000 | 10 000 |
| Air Force | 1 000 | 1 000 | 1 000 | 1 000 |
| Navy | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| Tanks | ? | 20 | 20 | 20 |
| Combat Aircraft | 16 | 16 | 22 | 22 |
| Transport Aircraft | ? | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| Combat Helos | ? | ? | 10 | 10 |
| Naval Patrol Craft | 4 | 6 | 6 | 8 |
| **HONDURAS** | | | | |
| Population (millions) | 2.6 | 2.8 | 2.9 | 2.9 |
| Total Strength | 4 725 | 5 725 | 5 735 | 9 600 |
| Army | 3 500 | 4 500 | 4 500 | 8 400 |
| Air Force | 1 200 | 1 200 | 1 200 | 1 200 |
| Navy | 25 | 25 | 35 | – |
| Tanks | ? | ? | ? | – |
| Combat Aircraft | 12 | 14 | 9 | 14 |
| Transport Aircraft | 7 | 7 | 5 | 5 |
| Combat Helos | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 |
| Transport Helos | – | – | – | – |
| Naval Patrol Craft | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| **NICARAGUA** | | | | |
| Population (millions) | 2.0 | 2.1 | 2.2 | 2.1 |
| Total Strength | 7 100 | 7 100 | 7 100 | 7 100 |
| Army | 5 400 | 5 400 | 5 400 | 5 400 |
| Air Force | 1 500 | 1 500 | 1 500 | 1 500 |
| Navy | 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 |
| Tanks | – | – | ? | ? |
| Combat Aircraft | 12 | 10 | 10 | 11 |
| Transport Aircraft | 17 | 17 | 18 | 17 |
| Combat Helos | ? | ? | 5 | 6 |
| Naval Patrol Craft | 6 | 4 | 4 | 8 |

The reaction of the armies of Central America to left-wing insurgents has been an increasing specialization in modern counter-insurgency (COIN) operations. "Civic action" programs have abounded since the mid-1960s, alongside better training and organization of these forces. In the late 1980s, this specialization in COIN operations has become total. Wars have rocked the region for a decade and a half and the armed forces have grown massively in response to the threat from the left. The Guatemalan army has increased over four-fold in strength and the Salvadorean nine-fold. Nicaragua's mobilized army of 1988 is ten times the size it was in 1979-80. Honduras, without a war to fight, has nonetheless more than tripled its forces. Even Costa Rica has felt obliged to increase dramatically its security forces and form an elite counter-insurgency battalion despite the 1949 abolition of the armed forces. Details of these trends can be found at Table 2.

Today, the armies of Central America are much more professional than in the past, better trained and equipped, and fully devoted to improving their

| 75-76 | 76-77 | 77-78 | 78-79 | 79-80 | 80-81 | 81-82 | 82-83 | 83-84 | 84-85 | 85-86 | 86-87 | 87-88 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | **EL SALVADOR** |
| 4.1 | 4.2 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.6 | 4.7 | 4.8 | 4.8 | 4.9 | 5.3 | 5.5 | 5.6 | 5.8 | Population (millions) |
| 5 130 | 7 155 | 7 130 | 7 130 | 6 930 | 7 250 | 9 850 | 16 000 | 24 650 | 41 650 | 41 650 | 42 640 | 47 000 | Total Strength |
| 4 000 | 6 000 | 6 000 | 6 000 | 6 500 | 7 000 | 9 000 | 14 900 | 22 000 | 39 000 | 38 650 | 38 650 | 43 000 | Army |
| 1 000 | 1 000 | 1 000 | 1 000 | 300 | 150 | 750 | 1 000 | 2 350 | 2 350 | 2 350 | 2 700 | 2 500 | Air Force |
| 130 | 155 | 130 | 130 | 130 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 300 | 300 | 650 | 1 290 | 1 500 | Navy |
| 12 | 12 | 12 | 15 | 15 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | 12 | Tanks |
| 22 | 24 | 21 | 21 | 25 | 31 | 25 | 27 | 36 | 59 | 32 | 24 | 31 | Combat Aircraft |
| 13 | 24 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 26 | 14 | 14 | 16 | 15 | 23 | Transport Aircraft |
| 1 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 13 | 18 | 16 | 15 | 40 | 16 | 23 | Combat Helos |
| – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | 47 | 44 | Transport Helos |
| 5 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 20 | 20 | 30 | Naval Patrol Craft |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | **GUATEMALA** |
| 5.8 | 6.0 | 6.2 | 6.3 | 6.8 | 6.95 | 7.2 | 7.26 | 7.6 | 8.2 | 8.4 | 8.6 | 8.8 | Population (millions) |
| 11 400 | 10 870 | 14 300 | 14 270 | 17 960 | 14 900 | 15 050 | 18 550 | 21 560 | 40 000 | 31 700 | 32 000 | 40 200 | Total Strength |
| 10 000 | 10 000 | 13 500 | 13 500 | 17 000 | 14 000 | 14 000 | 17 000 | 20 000 | 38 000 | 30 000 | 30 300 | 38 000 | Army |
| 1 000 | 970 | 400 | 370 | 400 | 450 | 450 | 600 | 600 | 1 000 | 700 | 700 | 700 | Air Force |
| 400 | 500 | 400 | 400 | 560 | 450 | 600 | 950 | 960 | 1 000 | 1 000 | 1 000 | 1 500 | Navy |
| 20 | 20 | 20 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 17 | 15 | 25 | 23 | 17 | 17 | Tanks |
| 20 | 9 | 13 | 11 | 13 | 10 | 10 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 16 | 12 | 12 | Combat Aircraft |
| 10 | 6 | 20 | 20 | 28 | 26 | 42 | 40 | 50 | 36 | 34 | 25 | 31 | Transport Aircraft |
| 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 8 | 16 | 34 | 25 | 25 | 25 | 22 | 12 | Combat Helos |
| 9 | 9 | 14 | 11 | 9 | 14 | 15 | 17 | 17 | 17 | 21 | 44 | 44 | Naval Patrol Craft |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | **HONDURAS** |
| 3.0 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.4 | 3.6 | 3.7 | 3.9 | 4.0 | 4.2 | 4.3 | 4.4 | 4.5 | 4.7 | Population (millions) |
| 11 200 | 14 200 | 14 200 | 14 200 | 11 300 | 11 300 | 11 200 | 13 000 | 15 200 | 17 200 | 16 600 | 19 200 | 16 950 | Total Strength |
| 10 000 | 13 000 | 13 000 | 13 000 | 10 000 | 10 000 | 10 000 | 11 500 | 13 500 | 15 500 | 14 600 | 17 000 | 14 600 | Army |
| 1 200 | 1 200 | 1 200 | 1 200 | 1 200 | 1 200 | 1 000 | 1 200 | 1 200 | 1 200 | 1 500 | 1 500 | 1 500 | Air Force |
| – | – | – | – | 100 | 100 | 200 | 300 | 500 | 500 | 500 | 700 | 850 | Navy |
| – | – | – | – | – | – | 17 | 17 | 16 | 16 | 12 | 15 | 15 | Tanks |
| 13 | 12 | 22 | 18 | 18 | 24 | 27 | 25 | 26 | 30 | 25 | 28 | 37 | Combat Aircraft |
| 10 | 13 | 8 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 13 | 21 | 22 | 20 | 22 | 23 | Transport Aircraft |
| 3 | 3 | – | – | – | 3 | 12 | 12 | 15 | 15 | 31 | 31 | 42 | Combat Helos |
| – | – | – | – | – | – | – | – | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | Transport Helos |
| – | – | – | – | 7 | 10 | 14 | 12 | 16 | 9 | 13 | 11 | 33 | Naval Patrol Craft |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | **NICARAGUA** |
| 2.2 | 2.2 | 2.3 | 2.4 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 2.8 | 3.2 | 3.2 | 3.3 | 3.4 | Population (millions) |
| 7 100 | 7 100 | 7 100 | 7 100 | 8 300 | ? | 6 700 | 21 700 | 48 800 | 61 800 | 62 850 | 72 000 | 72 000 | Total Strength |
| 5 400 | 5 400 | 5 400 | 5 400 | 8 000 | ? | 5 800 | 20 000 | 47 000 | 60 000 | 60 000 | 69 300 | 74 000 | Army |
| 1 500 | 1 500 | 1 500 | 1 500 | 200 | ? | 1 500 | 1 500 | 1 500 | 1 500 | 2 000 | 2 000 | 3 400 | Air Force |
| 200 | 200 | 200 | 200 | 100 | ? | 200 | 200 | 300 | 300 | 850 | 1 000 | 1 000 | Navy |
| ? | ? | ? | ? | ? | 2 | 6 | 28 | 48 | 75 | 150 | 135 | 175 | Tanks |
| 11 | 18 | 14 | 12 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 8 | 10 | 12 | 17 | 14 | 16 | Combat Aircraft |
| 20 | 29 | 29 | 29 | 37 | 35 | 7 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 14 | 14 | 21 | Transport Aircraft |
| 6 | 8 | 6 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 | – | 6 | 4 | 28 | 38 | 52 | Combat Helos |
| 9 | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 10 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 14 | 28 | 25 | 20 | Naval Patrol Craft |

counter-insurgency potential. Indeed, compared to their pre-1960 predecessors, the modern forces are unrecognizably efficient, structured and mobile.

These armies with the exception of Somoza's 'Guardia' have been able to confront, so far successfully, the revolutionary challenge. In Guatemala, years of ferocious repression have alternated with periods of reformism in a country where the army has usually held direct control. In El Salvador also, despite moderate elements of the army, the anti-reformers have had the upper hand most of the time. Honduras' army was in direct charge of the country from 1962 to 1985. Intense repression was not required in this second poorest country of the hemisphere, termed more than once its "sleepy hollow." Nonetheless, army rule and police activity have ensured that the economic and social ills of the country do not result in a real threat to the right.

Nicaragua's army presents similarities and contrasts to the three other "official" armies in the area. Like them it has known extraordinary expansion in the 1980s. Similarly, it has become a highly effective counter-insurgency force. And while not as "professional" as its northern neighbours, it does have some fairly sophisticated equipment, training and organization. As opposed to them, however, it has not been able to specialize exclusively in counter-insurgency. While one of its objectives is, of course, to defeat the contra rebels, an even more important one is to deter the direct military intervention of the United States. This requires the numbers, organized reserves, territorial defence structure, vital point defence arrangements, armour and antiaircraft defences to make the United States judge such an intervention as likely to be expensive in men and equipment and lengthy before victory is achieved. With such a dramatic political aim, it is hardly surprising that this force should have the constant ear of the government even if it is far from a challenge to the FSLN's control of the state.

The current state of the three regional wars can be summarized very briefly although it should be emphasized that changes are occurring with great frequency. In Guatemala, the army mounted victory campaigns on a significant scale in 1982 and 1983. By 1984 the insurgents were badly mauled and many fled the country. Their fighting strength, probably over 6 000 at one point in the war, has been reduced to fewer than 2 000. While continuing their sporadic attacks, these revolutionaries no longer pose a threat to the survival of the regime in Guatemala City, at least not in the short term.

In El Salvador, the various insurgent groups have united under the Frente Farabundo Martí de Liberación Nacional (FMLN) to conduct their war against the government in San Salvador. They control large areas of the country and operate widely in many others. While receiving some assistance from abroad, it is now generally agreed that their forces are in very many respects self-sustaining and are, in effect, a second government running much of the national territory. They have easy access to recruits and manufacture an extraordinary range and amount of their war material. Numbering probably 6 000 active insurgents, they can claim the support of a large part of the country's rural population. The army has proven incapable to date, despite truly massive United States military assistance, to do more than dent their strength. The FMLN, however, has so far equally proven that, though it can harass the army and come close to wrecking the economy, it cannot

defeat the military in the field and overthrow the government. The war could drag on a very long time indeed.

Nicaragua's government has been able to check both main contra objectives; that is, the capture of a town within the national territory that could be used as the site of an alternative "government," and the formation of a truly national resistance movement within the country's borders. The excesses of the contras and their links with the previous dictatorship precluded the latter, while the Sandinistas' popular support and military strength have frustrated the former. Nonetheless, contra attacks, with support from the United States, force a level of national mobilization which Nicaragua can ill afford. Added to economic mismanagement and the destruction left over from the anti-Somoza civil war, the contra threat greatly hinders Nicaraguan plans for reform, development and social advances. However, contra hopes for eventual victory, especially given the ups and downs of congressional aid, are not high.

## The Diplomatic Background

The growing crisis and violence in the Central American region was of great concern to conservative states in the wider region of the Caribbean Basin, especially to Mexico. The potential of the crisis to add to the difficulties of maintaining the sometimes shaky cohesion of the North Atlantic alliance focussed considerable Western European interest on the deteriorating situation as the 1980s began. Multilateral, Mexican and European initiatives of a variety of kinds occurred from 1981 on. These were followed by the lengthy and ambitious Contadora peace effort from early 1983 until 1987.

The island of Contadora, belonging to Panama, served in January of 1983 as a meeting ground for the Caribbean Basin states most troubled about the crisis: Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela. There they launched a major peace initiative aimed at the whole Central American region, adopting later both a Document of Objectives and Norms of Implementation. Subsequently, they have produced a series of drafts of the Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America. The group received important support from other Latin American countries, Canada and most Western European governments. The Latin American support was made more concrete by the 1985 formation of a Contadora Support Group composed of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay, and the process has received the continuous approval and co-operation of the United Nations and the Organization of American States.

The draft Act's provisions result particularly from the United States-Nicaragua dispute and its ramifications for the other states of the region. They take wide aim as is evident from the preamble's stated goal to "strengthen peace,

co-operation, confidence, democracy and economic and social development among the peoples of the region." Specific provisions behind this wide-ranging objective include in the 2 August 1987 (the latest) draft a general amnesty for, and dialogue with, opposition groups, a cease-fire, the initiation of a democratization process, an end to United States and other outside military aid to the region's insurgents; the restriction of the arms trade, limitations on foreign bases, the withdrawal of foreign military advisors, and the founding of an International Verification and Control Commission to oversee the functioning of the security-related elements of the agreement.

Such extensive objectives were, of course, not easy to achieve. Repeatedly the impetus behind the negotiations slackened. United States opposition to many of the Act's provisions proved a serious obstacle. Nicaragua also frequently had serious reservations about the Act. UN and OAS joint efforts in January 1987 to give new life to the negotiations gained little, given the lack of real political will to achieve peace on the part of several Central American leaders. However the "Iran-Contragate" scandal, the Hasenfus affair and Sandinista successes in the field, changed at least temporarily, the rules of the game.

At this juncture, President Oscar Arias of Costa Rica presented a 10-point proposal for regional peace. It called for national reconciliation; cease-fires; democratization; the suspension of military aid to, and reduction of weapons in, the region; as well as democracy, peace and development. His proposal aimed widely and would entail amnesties, elections, economic agreements and an end to aid to insurgent forces.

Discussions on the Arias Plan took place in the early summer of 1987 with, as mentioned, a further August Contadora Act draft. In addition, Honduras proposed a plan on 1 August and President Reagan one on the 5th of that busy month. The stage was set for the 6-7 August meeting of the five Central American presidents. The conference, dubbed "Esquipulas II," opted for a regional solution of the group's making, but their agreement signed on the 7th was in many senses a further elaboration of many of the Contadora ideas. The "Procedure for the Establishment of a Firm and Lasting Peace in Central America," as the Esquipulas II agreement was titled, called for the same sort of progress as most previous plans: cease-fires, amnesties for insurgents who lay down their arms, full pluralist democracy in all countries, the organization of national reconciliation commissions, national dialogues with unarmed opposition groups, the suspension of outside aid to insurgents, and the denial of the use of national territories to launch aggressive actions against neighbours.

Coming after the slow-down of the Contadora initiative, Esquipulas II brought new life to the peace process. Optimists became very hopeful that peace might actually come to the region as the governments involved undertook to achieve some of the objectives set out in the accords. Widely hailed as finally opening up the room for manoeuvre of governments and opposition in the five republics, Esquipulas II made, as one Canadian diplomat put it, "the lights burn late in all the chancelleries involved."

But, as will be seen later on, the true political will to find peace was extremely limited and, as Esquipulas' deadlines became more and more "flexible," this stage of the peace process also began to bog down. Nonetheless, some political and military events furthered the objectives of the plan. The United States Congressional vote against the contra aid program in January 1988 was followed by energetic FSLN military initiatives which kept the resistance off-balance and demoralized. At the same time, the Honduran government came under increasing domestic pressure to do something about the guerrilla bases on its national territory.

In dramatic moves, the Ortega government made the announcement in January 1988 that it would now drop its previous refusal and accept direct negotiations with the contras. Once begun, those negotiations were the occasion for extraordinary and widely publicized concessions on the part of Managua. The negotiations led to the surprise accord reached at Sapoá on 23 March, an agreement which seemed to offer real hope for a settlement of at least the Nicaraguan dimension of the Central American crisis. While not strictly speaking within the cadre of the draft Contadora Act or Esquipulas II agreements, its whole tenure was a continuation of discussions held in their context. Involving enormous concessions on the part of the FSLN, Sapoá was also a major success for the Sandinistas. The provisions of the agreement could hardly be seen as anything but pro-FSLN. The contras agreed to concentrate in a series of zones in Nicaragua and to incorporate themselves into the unarmed legitimate opposition in the country. The legitimacy of the FSLN regime was then accepted by the very elements within Nicaragua for whom the United States was arguing it was working. In return, Nicaragua promised a series of measures to ensure a truly pluralist political system and a legitimate role for the Democratic Resistance, as the contras had come to call themselves.

Again hopes for a lasting peace were raised only to be dashed. While most observers had long felt that the Salvadorean civil war was a more thorny problem than the Nicaraguan fighting, the hope was that a successful peace treaty in the latter would create more political "space" for an eventual solution to the former. The end to such thoughts was not long in coming. Within weeks of the Sapoá agreement, the elements of the contra military wing most closely related to the Somoza regime denounced it, threatening dire results if it was not repudiated. Even the tense cease-fire, which had given the country some months of relative peace, was increasingly abandoned. Worse still, Sandinista patience gave way temporarily and a clamp-down on the most vociferous elements of the legal opposition in the country occurred in the summer of 1988.

## Verification in the Actual Agreements to Date

Thus one can point to a series of major diplomatic initiatives aiming at peace in the Central American region over the last seven years. They have resulted in a draft regional treaty of great complexity which was internationally applauded, a signed multilateral agreement among the five nations themselves, and a partial arrangement dealing with the Nicaraguan war alone. Yet despite major steps forward, they have not resulted in any significant lessening of the crisis in the area nor have they stopped any of the regional conflicts. Nonetheless, the kind of issues they sought to resolve, and the methods they devised to do so, appear to be relative constants in the various stages of the Central American peace process. Generally speaking they address the principal concerns of the states and most of the parties involved, and given the nature of the agreements so far, they give us a clear idea of what the countries most affected, as well as their sponsors outside the region, are willing to accept. Lastly, they include those verification aspects of an eventual resolution of the crisis so far identified.

It should therefore be worthwhile to look more closely at those aspects of the three major accords which did, or could, involve verification. The three will be taken in chronological order.

For purposes of discussion, the Contadora Act draft of 6 June 1986 will be considered the final stage of that negotiation process. In this version of the text, the key verification elements of which are found at Annex A, the wide-ranging nature of the commitments undertaken by the parties to the proposed agreement can be seen quite clearly. Their engagements deal with the whole range of issues of human rights, elections, national reconciliation and refugees, as well as the reduction of political tensions and confidence-building measures. Included also are economic and social matters. Lastly, and most thorny of all, are the security elements of the draft accord. Thus, from the beginning a peace process involving far more than defence concerns was in play.

Nonetheless defence issues were of primary importance. Parties would commit themselves to detailed advanced notification (30 days at a minimum) of military manoeuvres taking place less than 30 kilometres from another state, and such manoeuvres could be observed by officers from the armies of the neighbours of the country in question. Insofar as manoeuvres involving forces from countries outside Central America were concerned, these were to be halted until the states of the region agreed on limitations to weapons and force levels. In the absence of such agreement, a minimum commitment was that no intimidation of a Central American nation would be allowed through such exercises, and that here again notification would be the rule. These international manoeuvres were also limited in length (maximum of 15 days), location (not less than 50 kilometres from the border of a non-participating country), frequency (not more than one a year), size (not more than 3 000 soldiers), make-up (extra-regional forces not larger than national ones), and secrecy (all parties would be invited to send observers).

Further provisions would apply once agreements on force levels and weapons were reached. After such an accord, no extra-regional forces would be allowed to exercise in Central America, and even regional states could only hold exercises among themselves totalling fewer than 30 days a year and not exceeding a deployment of 4 000 troops.

A staged process of arms and troop reductions would follow a freeze on force levels and weapons acquisition. To facilitate this, the Act set up the Verification and Control Commission to receive and check strength statements, weapons inventories and location statements coming within 15 days from each of the signatories. Arms control negotiations would begin among the parties but, if these failed to produce agreement on force levels and timetables for reductions, the Commission would suggest provisional commitments on these matters. Limits on the strength and weaponry of the countries' armies would be based on:

- security needs and defence capabilities;
- area and population;
- extent and characteristics of the boundaries;
- military expenditure in relation to gross domestic product;
- military budget in relation to public expenditure and other social indicators;
- military technology, combat preparedness, military manpower, quantity and quality of the military installations and of military resources;
- armaments subject to reduction; and
- military presence as well as presence of foreign advisors.

The idea seems to be to assign a value to each of these criteria, and the limits for military preparedness would thus probably be expressed first in an aggregate number of points allowed for each country.

Further security arrangements under the Contadora Act were related to the presence of foreign forces on Central American soil, the illegal arms supply and other support for "irregular forces" operating against established regimes, and the use of territories for military action against another state in the region. Insofar as support for irregular forces was concerned, the signatories would agree to halt weapons transfers from their countries to armed groups fighting against regional governments. Other support, such as "turning a blind eye" to the use of one's territory as a base for such groups, or active assistance to them, was also forbidden. Nor could the territory of a State Party be used by the forces of an

extra-regional power as a base for action against a Central American state. Lastly, within 180 days of the Act's signing, all foreign military personnel would have to be removed. Countries would provide a list of such personnel and they would be removed within this period. Likewise, foreign military establishments would have to be closed.

Confidence-building and risk management measures also included the establishment of a sort of region-wide "hot line" ensuring ease of communications among the governments involved. The Verification and Control Commission would also be linked into this communications network.

Clearly the verification requirements of this accord would be very extensive, to say the least. On the civilian political side, one could envisage assistance in verifying and monitoring:

1. the functioning of national reconciliation commissions;
2. human rights agreements covering a vast area of activities;
3. elections; and
4. agreements on refugee resettlement, control and treatment.

Even more dramatic in scope would be those areas of security concerns requiring verification, monitoring or enforcing. This would involve monitoring at governmental, military headquarters and field levels; a research function; and a systems infrastructure function. Included would be:

### Governmental and Headquarters Levels

1) monitoring notification of national manoeuvres;
2) monitoring notification of international manoeuvres among regional states;
3) monitoring notification of international manoeuvres involving outside states;
4) monitoring dates involved in exercises; and
5) to the extent possible, verifying the no intimidation provision.

### Field Level

1) verifying limitations on weaponry and strength levels;
2) verifying limitations on number and length of exercises held;
3) verifying areas used for exercises;
4) verifying nationalities involved in exercises;
5) verifying weapons flow to signatory states;
6) verifying weapons flow to irregular forces;
7) verifying end of support to irregular forces;
8) verifying departure of foreign military forces and advisors; and
9) verifying use of national territories by irregular forces.

**Systems Infrastructure**

1) setting up of a regional communications system among the governments, armed forces and national agencies concerned as well as with the Verification and Control Commission; and
2) setting up of a liaison system among the above.

**Research**

1) preparation of appropriate military preparedness levels for the signatories insofar as weapons and personnel are concerned; and
2) preparation of criteria and value assessments in order to arrive at figures for the preceding requirement.

The verification arrangements envisaged by the Act were not limited to the Verification and Control Commission, which was to look after security matters only. They included two committees, one responsible for political and refugee concerns, and one dealing with social and economic issues covered by the Act.

Thus, one sees with the Contadora Act draft an immensely large range of verification responsibilities which, when assessed fully, cover the whole spectrum of verification related to risk management, confidence-building and enforcement of agreements.

In the August of 1987 Esquipulas II agreement, we see a similar breadth of issues dealt with, but a much less clear future for security concerns. After an extensive preamble by the Central American presidents themselves, the agreement proposed an 11-point procedure to be followed to arrive at the establishment of a "firm and lasting peace" in the region.

The procedure called for a dialogue with disarmed and amnestied opposition groups to further national reconciliation. Linked with this would be the amnesties themselves and the formation of national reconciliation commissions. Cease-fire efforts would be redoubled and democratization would begin, including freedom of the press writ large, pluralism for political parties, and the abolition of national states of emergency. Free elections would be held to underwrite the democratization goal, and international observers would be invited to monitor them.

Governments of the region would end their own support for "irregular forces or insurrectional movements" and would call on extra-regional governments to do likewise. Use of national territory and military or logistic support provided to such groups was also banned.

There followed a joint declaration of intentions vis-à-vis refugees, peace and development. Finally, an International Verification and Follow-Up Commission (CIVS after its Spanish acronym) was to be set up according to norms laid out by the secretaries-general of the United Nations and the Organization of American States, the five regional foreign ministers, and the Contadora and Contadora Support groups. Its role would be responsibility for "verifying and monitoring fulfilment of the commitments set forth." A calendar for the follow-through on the commitments made was then laid out.

Unfortunately, the more detailed security aspects of the Contadora Act were left aside even though, as can be seen, a very great proportion of Esquipulas II was drawn from the Contadora draft. Instead, a mere promise of negotiations was made under a seventh section entitled "Negotiations on Security, Verification and the Control and Limitation of Weapons." In this, it was simply said that the five regional governments,

> ... with the Contadora Group acting as mediator shall continue negotiating on the points outstanding in the draft Contadora Act of Peace and Co-operation in Central America with regard to security, verification and control. These negotiations shall also cover measures for disarming irregular forces prepared to avail themselves of amnesty decrees.

Thus, one ended up with a signed accord, of which the bulk of the security provisions were only stated in another accord, which itself was only an un-signed draft. The International Verification and Follow-Up Commission had, at best, an extremely limited mandate to verify security matters and this included little of the breadth and detail contained in the Contadora Act draft. Instead, the Commission could merely report on the progress of the national dialogues, amnesties, national reconciliation commissions, cease-fires, the democratization provisions of the agreement, the security elements of support for irregular forces, and the use of national territories by them for attacks on neighbours.

As mentioned, not altogether surprisingly, this agreement has not known particular success. Deadlines passed and the forces opposed to peace in the region were able to recover sufficiently to block much of what the accord sought to achieve. However, in the diplomatic area, room for manoeuvre was created by the Contadora and Esquipulas accords, and other initiatives followed in the wake of the loosening up of the regional diplomatic scene and the creation of "political space" for a number of actors.

Chief among these initiatives were those occasioned in Nicaragua. Indirect and then direct negotiations between the government and the contras over the winter and spring of 1987-88 led to the rather startling Sapoá accord of March, 1988.

At Sapoá a cease-fire was agreed between the FSLN government and the Democratic Resistance under the official rubric of the Esquipulas II agreement. The truce was to be 60 days long with an extension pledged by both parties and negotiations on a permanent cease-fire to begin on 6 April. The accord called for:

1) the contras to assemble with their weapons in a series of zones while negotiations continued;
2) the government to grant an amnesty for 3 300 prisoners in two stages;
3) the government to permit "exclusively humanitarian aid" to go to the contras provided it was "channeled through neutral organizations";
4) the government to "guarantee unrestricted freedom of expression";
5) the contras to be allowed to take part in the Esquipulas "national dialogue";
6) the government to allow the free return of exiles; and
7) contra fighters to be allowed to participate in elections.

All of these provisions were to be verified under arrangements made with Cardinal Obando y Bravo, long-time middleman in the negotiations, and with the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States. They would involve, at a minimum, an observer group to verify, in the field, both the concentration of contra forces in the designated zones, and the passage and reception of humanitarian aid for them.

In addition, a verification mechanism would be requested to monitor the application of the amnesty as well as the multiple tasks associated with the democratic reforms mentioned above.

As is well known, the implementation of the Sapoá accord is fraught with problems, largely resulting from divisions within the contra leadership. Nonetheless, despite the recent halting of negotiations between the two sides, neither seems willing to openly and fully abandon the cease-fire and this leaves some room for hope.

All three agreements, then, either propose or assume the wide employment of verification in order to reassure regional and outside powers of the goodwill of the signatories. The resulting reinforcement of mutual confidence is seen by all as a *sine qua non* of peace in the area.

## Minimum Content of a Peace Agreement

Contadora has been seen to be a thoroughly comprehensive draft accord with extensive security ramifications and highly developed verification procedures to ensure compliance with the commitments undertaken, both political and military. Esquipulas II assumed the continuation of these Contadora security arrangements, through some negotiation process, in order for its provisions to be respected. The slowing down of this second main wave of peace diplomacy did not halt the momentum in Nicaragua, where a tentative peace agreement was actually reached, if not honoured fully for long.

It is, of course, far from certain where or when the peace process might pick up again. It is therefore extremely difficult to imagine the exact context of a verification regime that might respond to an eventual regional peace agreement. However, there are "a large number of constructive initiatives that a country might undertake outside of the context of negotiations that can contribute to the potential for verification of specific agreements."[2] Some such agreement will possibly still come about, if only in the long run. What would it contain as a minimum? If an answer can be found to that question, the verification regime required to sustain the minimum agreement can be considered.

Any region-wide peace agreement should logically include a cease-fire between governments and at least the major insurgent groupings. A weakness of Esquipulas II was that it was, as one External Affairs official put it, "a peace treaty between five countries which were not at war." That is, the fighting certainly has a trans-national and more widely international dimension, but it is essentially a struggle between insurgent groups and their own national governments. The exclusion of half the parties to the conflicts that rage in the area does not help the negotiations to bring about real peace. In El Salvador, for example, the FMLN movement simply rejected the relevance of Esquipulas II to their situation. While the Nicaraguan contras were more interested in the negotiations than were the FMLN across the Gulf of Fonseca, their eventual arrival at the negotiating table had more to do with military distress and the reduction in United States assistance than with the progress of the Esquipulas process. Meanwhile, in Guatemala, the insurgents met with the government under the vague auspices of Esquipulas II, but little came of it.

There can be no complete peace process without the participation of all three major insurgent groups. Progress on the road to peace can perhaps be made without them, but over the long run their agreeing to halt the fighting is the only option other than government victory.

An arms control regime is also vital to the arrival at a lasting peace in the area. Ideological and national divisions, as well as current and historic interference in one another's domestic affairs, poison the relations of the Central American states. Nicaragua's large forces and reserves frighten its neighbours. Costa Rica has no real army and fears a traditionally hostile Managua, now well-armed and fairly

unfriendly. Honduras has an increasingly large and good army but one vastly inferior in numbers to the Nicaraguan, even if its air force is at the same time vastly superior. Salvadoreans feel that Nicaragua is fanning their civil war by helping and encouraging the FMLN. Lastly, Nicaraguans fear an alliance of the region's conservative regimes against them, an alliance that already exists on paper in the form of the 1963 CONDECA grouping of the "anti-communist" states of the area now Honduras, El Salvador and Guatemala. Even this last country, relatively far from the fighting, still feels the threat posed by leftist radicalism in Nicaragua, and this sentiment is particularly strong among senior army officers.

It will be necessary to reduce these fears and suspicions -- largely related to perceptions of other countries' military strength, capabilities and intentions -- to manageable proportions. In this context, the limitation of arms in the region will, as the Contadora draft suggests, be indispensable.

The presence of foreign forces on Central American soil must also be included in any agreement. The posting to Nicaragua of Soviet and Cuban advisors, under virtually any conditions and in however limited numbers, is anathema not only to the United States but also to all Nicaragua's immediate neighbours. U.S. troops and aircraft positioned in El Salvador and Honduras pose a direct and large-scale threat to Nicaragua, and are clearly in the region to do just that. A significant reduction in this presence must be achieved if Managua is to "lower its guard" sufficiently to make its neighbours amenable to a peaceful settlement.

An end to subversion, and outside support for subversion, is also crucial to peace. Governments, revolutionary or conservative, must renounce giving assistance to insurgent forces in other parts of the region. This includes, as mentioned, direct military and logistic support, but also the all-important at least tacit support implied by the use of one's territory for such forces to launch attacks from "safe havens" across borders. Frontier control is vitally linked to the end of subversion supported from the outside.

Security guarantees of the widest possible nature should of course be searched for, but the minimum required would assure neighbours against surprise attack and more general aggression against the use of territory for an outside power's attack on a neighbour, against coalescing against a single state, and the like. In addition, given the position and influence of the United States in region, security guarantees concerning the use of Nicaraguan territory, ports, airfields and other potentially useful military assets by an outside power, should be given openly and completely. Nicaragua appears to recognize this need.

While the above provisions offer some confidence-building measures, more would probably be needed, even for a minimal agreement. A verification regime supporting all these propositions would be the minimum. De-militarized zones in key border areas might be another CBM. The much-touted Central American parliament would also probably help.

Refugee control or even democratization is not truly vital to peace. Refugee situations could be dealt with after an accord had produced significant progress in reducing tensions. Despite protestations to the contrary, local regimes are not particularly distressed about the political colour of the Managua regime. Rather they are concerned about its strength, intentions and revolutionary example to their own peoples. In that sense, a security guarantee involving the renunciation of subversion is doubly necessary.

A particular arrangement of the above minimal features of a regional peace agreement -- a cease-fire, insurgent participation, arms control, foreign force reduction, an end to subversion, and some form of security guarantees -- seems to this author vital. Only by addressing these six areas can real progress be made in even a minimally regional fashion.

## A "Maximum Content" Agreement

An accord aimed at maximizing the favourable aspects of a peace settlement in Central America would of course involve further security considerations than the one first described as well as an extensive range of democratization and co-operation provisions.

The other agreements' provisions would be included as far as they go, and such an accord would almost certainly look more like the Contadora drafts than like Esquipulas II, since security matters would presumably not be left "in the air," to be dealt with during further negotiations in a different diplomatic forum.

Security provisions would, it is believed, assume a look nearly identical to Contadora except for two major possible features. If the insurgent forces could be enticed into the negotiations, or into related and linked negotiations, the security aspects dealing with their disarming and subsequent reintegration with their national societies could be expanded. Especially valuable in this context would be further cease-fire, laying down of arms, border and territorial control provisions. Behind these, and absolutely vital, would be further guarantees regarding democratization, without which no such insurgent participation is imaginable.

A "maximum content" accord would also attempt to implicate the chief extra-regional actor, the United States. Calls have repeatedly been made by Central American leaders, particularly presidents Arias and Ortega, for the United States to either join the negotiations or at least open up its own bilateral negotiations with Nicaragua. This stance was inherited from European, Mexican and later Contadora appeals for Washington to undertake such a move.

The full consequences of not having the United States involved in some sort of security negotiations with Nicaragua are that most peace initiatives are bound to fail. The United States position as a world super-power, as the overwhelming regional power of the Americas and especially the Caribbean Basin, and as the greatest economic power on earth, would mean an automatic U.S. role in the region's security. This role is vastly heightened by Washington's position as by far the largest contributor of aid to, the largest investor in, the largest supplier of, and the greatest market for, all the Central American countries. No other country is even in the same league as the United States in these vital areas of national and regional survival and hopes for prosperity.

Perhaps equally telling with regard to the U.S. role in the region is its historic and solid links with the local oligarchies and the national military forces of Central America. This was noted above but its relevance to peace negotiations must be underscored if one is to understand its potential part in forwarding or stopping otherwise potentially successful negotiations.

The United States insists on three things from Nicaragua:

1) an end to a Soviet and Cuban role in the country, which Washington sees as excessive;
2) guarantees that Nicaragua will not allow its territory to be used by Cuba or the Soviet Union for bases for nuclear, conventional, or subversive operations against its neighbours or the U.S.; and
3) democratization of the internal political processes in the country.

Indeed, U.S. demands apparently do not end with these three conditions. Managua, especially since the Esquipulas II breakthrough, has been willing to negotiate in either a bilateral or multilateral forum on all these issues. However, the United States has insisted that Nicaragua would not be negotiating in good faith and has refused all attempts to edge it towards talks with the Sandinistas on any basis at all.

The U.S. government has gone further than mere opposition to future Washington-Managua negotiations and has used pressure to push Honduras and El Salvador into producing "a closing window of opportunity," as the House of Commons Special Committee describes the current state of the regional peace process.[3] Recovering from the "Iran-Contragate" scandal and defeats for contra aid in the Congress, the Reagan administration let its real reaction to Esquipulas II be known. Regional governments know that future economic and military aid, vital for their survival, depends on a stance favourable to the United States and their interest in peace waxes and wanes, to some considerable degree, according to the super-power's wishes.

This is not an attempt to decry this state of affairs. It is a fact of Central American political life and has been for nearly a century. However, in the context of a real desire for peace in the region, the wishes of the U.S. must be taken into account. No peace treaty in this area is possible if it is opposed in any determined fashion by the United States. That country's friends in the region include key governments, strong armed forces, and influential political and economic elites that have no intention of abandoning the Washington connection.

Thus, a "maximum content" treaty will aim to reassure the United States that its security concerns in the region are addressed to its satisfaction. This will not be easy but might, with a new administration in the White House and continued flexibility on the part of the Sandinista government, be possible.

If Nicaragua will assure the United States that it has ended the heavy Soviet and Cuban presence in national affairs; if it will bar, under a verifiable agreement, not only that former presence but any future one; and if it will undertake a major effort at Western-style democratization, likewise under a verifiable arrangement, then United States opposition to peace soon might disappear or at least meaningfully dissipate. The role of verification in a situation so fraught with distrust, recrimination and historically-founded enmity, would be difficult to exaggerate. The role of allies of the United States in such verification could be crucial in making the accord, and the peace process in general, a success.

# Étapisme

The vast difficulties involved in even the "minimalist" objectives outlined in this paper, not to mention those of a "maximalist" accord, have forced many observers to search for something short of a comprehensive approach to bringing about peace in Central America. In Canada, for example, a Roundtable on Interim and Confidence-Building Measures in Central America was held in 1987, under the auspices of the Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security (CIIPS). In a report prepared for CIIPS by Liisa North, a well-known expert on peace in the region, hope was held out for what was termed an "incrementalist approach" to the problem.[4]

That hope stems from the idea that, in the face of U.S. opposition to a comprehensive peace agreement, and the resulting Salvadorean and Honduran intransigence, an attempt should be made on a bilateral, or more limited multilateral basis to find some avenues for progress on the road to peace. Liisa North cites several examples of such initiatives working and acting as confidence-building measures among the countries involved. Formal and informal border control arrangements between Nicaragua and Costa Rica on the one hand, and between Nicaragua and Honduras on the other, were mentioned.

Such initiatives can be helpful in creating confidence among the governments involved and may help to reduce tensions as a result. It is true that the experience gained in working together by the secretaries-general of the United Nations and the Organization of American States is positive and welcome, and could herald useful joint initiatives in the future. Indeed, since the CIIPS conference, the UN and OAS secretaries-general took on major assistance roles in Esquipulas II, CIVS and other peace-forwarding activities in the region. However, for the purposes of this paper, partial or incremental "étapiste" initiatives are left out. The concern here is the verification of a general regional agreement. Proposals for bilateral or less wide-ranging multilateral steps are so varied that they must be addressed in a separate study, especially if they are to be analysed from the point of view of what their verification provisions would imply.

While real progress may indeed be more likely with less ambitious agreements, the focus of this paper will remain on the comprehensive accords dealt with thus far, and to study more closely aspects of their verification.

## Verification of Prospective Agreements

The discussion will focus first on the verification implications of the "minimalist" approach and then it will expand to include the salient additional elements of the "maximalist" approach which seeks to include greater democratization and to win U.S. support. Also considered will be those elements of verification more usually found in the security features of a peace agreement. Only then will the discussion shift to "political" verification, which has so far seemed such a major factor in the peace process negotiations.

Insofar as security aspects are concerned, then, a verification force would probably be capable of the following:

1. the verification of cease-fire provisions between governments and their armed opposition groups;
2. verification that national territories are not being used as bases for "irregular forces" operating against other regional states;
3. ensuring that support is not going from states or private organizations in those states to such "irregular forces";
4. ensuring that the agreed departure of, or reduction in, foreign forces on Central American soil is carried out;
5. ensuring that other arms control provisions are carried through, such as:
    a) levels of troops agreed to by the parties and timings and circumstances of reductions;
    b) sophistication and levels of weaponry agreed and the circumstances of control and disposal of weapons;
    c) accuracy of the publication and exchanges of data on military forces;
    d) accuracy of notification of manoeuvres and application of the invitation procedures to appropriate observers;
    e) location, type and size of manoeuvres as agreed by the parties;
    f) the inspection of sensitive areas;
    g) possible establishment of de-militarized zones;
    h) possible establishment of insurgent collection zones;
    i) provisions related to the arms trade, legal and illegal;
6. border patrol related to 2., 3., 5.f) and 5.i) above.

All of the above involve complicated measures to ensure their success. Negotiations will need to discuss the detailed objectives of the force deployed for the complicated task at hand. Is it to be an observer mission, or a peacekeeping or even peace-restoring force? That is to say, will it consist of individuals or teams observing, inspecting, verifying or supervising? Or rather will it be made up of combat units or elements, lightly armed only for self-defence, interposed between government forces and guerrillas? Or will it be entitled to use force, at least locally, to impose a peaceful solution? Or will it be a combination of some, or all, of these elements?

*Figure 1 Joe Clark Meets Oscar Arias in San José, Costa Rica*

In November 1987, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs met with Costa Rican President Oscar Arias to review developments in Central America and prospects for the Central American peace process. Canada has long been supportive of the peace process in Central America and has contributed on various occasions to thinking on verification in this context.

It appears to this author that only an observer mission, or at most such a mission with some elements of a peacekeeping force, can be contemplated in Central America. There has never been any discussion of doing anything that any of the regional states did not want done and this will surely continue to be the case. An observer mission is really what is contemplated by Canada and other states interested in moving the peace process along. Nonetheless, the possible requirement for a peacekeeping force to stand between government forces and insurgents, especially in the early stages of an agreement, cannot be excluded. In this context it should be said that this sort of tasking is not appreciated greatly by peacekeeping forces who would normally be seen in a position of separating the regular armed forces of states, forces responsive to central governments party to the regulating accord and disciplined in a normal fashion. Canada, with its long peacekeeping experience, has been particularly careful on this point and with reason.

Further detail on the requirements of the likely verification tasks is needed and these jobs will be taken one by one for (necessarily) brief exposition. Firstly, then, insofar as cease-fires are concerned, there is of course great uncertainty as no cease-fire has yet been negotiated in Guatemala or El Salvador and the Nicaraguan March 1988 example is far from settled. Nonetheless, at a minimum the provisions of any cease-fire would require the capability to investigate complaints and pass them on for action to higher peacekeeping, national government, or armed opposition group headquarters. If, as under the Sapoá agreement, the verification of security aspects would extend over not only the cease-fire but also over concentrations of insurgents and the receipt of aid in the concentration zones, either a de-militarized zone with a resident peacekeeping force, or at least a significant observer mission would probably be necessary to ensure compliance in areas where discipline may be rather lax and where sentiment runs high.

Verification of provisions forbidding the use of national territories as bases for actions against neighbouring states would also be taxing, to say the least. As mentioned, in what has come to be called the "Ethell paper," the "actual control of borders should remain the responsibility of the host countries."[5] However, as will be seen, just spot-checking borders in any meaningful way could be exhausting and take up the efforts of a great many personnel and other resources, particularly vehicles and helicopters. The borders, however, are far from the whole problem. Contra presence in Honduras, for example, is pervasive throughout much of the east of the country and even in the capital. Links with the government and elements of the high command and the army are frequently close; "turning a blind eye" to contra activity is almost a tradition. Under such circumstances, meaningful verification would possibly involve a real investigative role requiring time, expertise, knowledge of the language, flexibility and mobility. All of these require personnel, vehicle and probably helicopter resources. Furthermore, investigating complaints could be a lengthy and potentially delicate operation.

Related closely to this indirect support is the actual support for the contras coming from Honduras and elsewhere, and that for the FMLN coming from Nicaragua. Such support is often logistical, frequently financial, and again often of the merely "turning a blind eye" variety. Verification of agreements dealing with this problem area would involve many of the same activities as for the improper use of territory. However, the search for banned weapons traffic as well as other supplies will further stretch the verifying force's resources. Several borders would be involved as would the Gulf of Fonseca, Lake Nicaragua, substantial lengths of coastline, and the air access routes to at least El Salvador and Honduras if not Guatemala as well.

Compared to these large responsibilities over vast air, land and sea spaces, ensuring the agreed departure of, or reduction in, foreign forces could prove relatively easy. U.S. forces in the region are well-publicized and fairly centralized as are their training installations and personnel. In addition, neither the Soviet Union nor Cuba is likely to risk discovery that it is "cheating" on an accord from which it feels it has much to gain. Thus, there would be pressures forcing good behaviour on the outside powers and this should ease what might otherwise be a

verification nightmare. Nonetheless, the timing features of such a provision might well still mean that significant personnel resources were needed, if only because of the extent of Soviet and Cuban involvement in Nicaragua, and of the United States presence in the rest of the region.

More complicated again would be the other arms control provisions likely to be included in such an accord as listed earlier in sub-paragraph 5. The observer mission, or its headquarters, would at first have to verify, through at least a system of spot checks, and probably more thoroughly, the accuracy of troop levels, their deployment, the numbers and sophistication of their weapons, and similar details on national military affairs submitted to it in order to give base figures both for eventual negotiations on those levels, and for the establishing of the limits proposed.

Subsequently the agreed reductions and eventual levels would have to be verified in some way. Particularly important would be the timings and circumstances of such reductions and the stages for their various implementation features. Since forces are dispersed throughout the region, frequently in isolated locations, and since troops are numerous, equipment varied, and installations widespread, verification will likewise need to be wide-ranging. Its achievement will require significant numbers of personnel to carry it through in a meaningful way, even if complaint investigation is kept to a minimum. It must be stressed, however, that with the Sapoá and Esquipulas II agreements, the only signed agreements to date, there has been no lack of such complaints. It would be optimistic in the extreme to think there will be only a few in such a highly charged domestic and international atmosphere as is present in Central America, and is likely still to exist to a considerable extent once an accord is finally reached. There will thus be a need for a complaints mechanism, as well as a bilateral co-operative mechanism to dispel concerns before they become complaints.

Agreement on the levels of troops allowed to each party, as well as the timings and circumstances of their reduction, will require verification. If the regional states are to have any degree of a real sense of security, these levels of troops must be seen as reasonable and non-threatening where neighbours are concerned. No confidence-building measure (CBM) would be more important than the smooth transition of local forces from their current massive size (see Table 2) to levels more commensurate with peacetime armed forces. No CBM would therefore be more closely watched than this one, and the efficient verification of its provisions would be vital.

One has only to look at recent writings on the size of Central American forces, particularly U.S. statements on those of Nicaragua, to see the room there is for misunderstanding on this matter. The size and dispersal of regional armed forces would complicate efforts to verify reductions in their strength. In addition, the "local" arrangements among security forces not necessarily part of the regular armies of the republics could leave room for doubt among other parties. The existence of large reserve forces in Nicaragua could also render more difficult an observer force's mission although this last issue should be at least partially

resolved through negotiated strength levels arrived at prior to the mission's arrival. A United States acceptance of a peace agreement might well hinge particularly on this aspect of the accord and, given the importance of Washington's acquiescence, verification here would have to allow for matters of concern to be pursued to a conclusion with the full co-operation of the parties involved.

An agreement would also probably include stipulations regarding acceptable levels of certain types of sophisticated weaponry, their control and, perhaps, their disposal. Dealing with such weapons can be easy or difficult, depending on their characteristics. The United States, Honduras and El Salvador have expressed concern over Nicaraguan armoured forces, especially tanks, for example. These, however, should be relatively simple to count and, if they are to be reduced in numbers, their size and distinctive features assist in such a process. High-performance aircraft and helicopters have similar features where reduction verification is concerned. Less easy would be the checking of reductions in light but sophisticated anti-aircraft weapons such as hand-held surface-to-air missiles. Yet these weapons' efficiency and widespread use in the current Central American conflicts ensure the interest of several of the parties in their control. Again, the dispersal and numbers of weapons involved, especially among insurrectional groups, will complicate the verification of these measures in the field.

Related to these matters is the publication and exchange of data on military forces in the Central American region. Doing so should certainly help to build confidence, if the verification of the data involved can be achieved. Secrecy in such matters is a well-established tradition in Central American armies, a practice greatly exacerbated by Nicaragua's perceived "defection" from the conservative camp and the decade of regional war experienced since the mid-to-late 1970s. While, as a result such publishing and exchange of information would be particularly useful as a CBM, it would equally be totally distrusted if not adequately verified. The staff and field arrangements of the observer force would therefore have to be geared to this role.

Easier to verify should be the accuracy of notification of manoeuvres, and the process of inviting observers to such exercises. A mission presence with national defence headquarters in the various republics should be able to ensure relatively simply these provisions. Even now Central American armies must mobilize tremendous resources to undertake the level of manoeuvres mentioned, for example, in the Contadora Act draft. They take time to organize and involve staffing activities of considerable dimensions. Related provisions of a Central American peace accord should not pose excessive hardships on the mission tasked with verifying them.

Verifying the location, type and size of such agreed manoeuvres could prove, however, somewhat more difficult, or at least more time-consuming. It would be one thing for a Central American republic to state its intention to have a particular exercise in a particular place, and with a purpose and size of a given nature. To verify that such exercises were indeed of the proportions, in the area, and for the purpose, stated by the government in question, is of course another

matter. Insofar as location is concerned, these countries are small and, while travel is not necessarily easy, troop convoys have been known to move relatively large distances in short periods of time. To verify that troops actually remained in the locations announced, observers would need to be present and have the mobility to visit at least some of the areas within the exercise zone at all times. This same mission presence would be required to ensure that the size of the exercise remained as announced. Here as well mobility for the observers would be vital.

Most difficult would be verifying the type of manoeuvre. While specific objectives set for achievement by national headquarters should not be difficult to check, the purpose of the manoeuvre, especially insofar as the "intimidation" provisions of some texts produced thus far are concerned, could give rise to dispute. Without United States acceptance of a possible accord, "international manoeuvre" provisions could be particularly fraught with difficulties. In this sense, these matters relate as much to political as to military verification and would require a delicate sense of judgement where intentions and likely complaints are concerned. It is conceivable that, as with the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) and the Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CCSBMDE), there could be another system established which would not necessarily be such a large burden for the observer on peacekeeping force. This might be done through the issuance of invitations, by the country holding the manoeuvres to those potentially threatened by them, for national observer teams to be sent rather than extra-regional ones. This initiative does not preclude a challenge arrangement with which the extra-regional observer system could respond.

Inspection of sensitive areas, while perhaps straightforward, will require resources. With the large areas involved, with long coasts and wide air spaces, and with many borders and special sectors to deal with, verification teams will need personnel, mobility and as much technologically advanced equipment as can be made available in order to cut down the strain on human resources. As has been seen in the recent United States investigations of drug trafficking in Central America, local officers can have extraordinary degrees of independence and control in areas off the beaten track and far from the capital. The past record of Honduran and other countries' officers allowing illegal activities in their areas of control leads to a high degree of suspicion as to the reliability of even national armed forces' reports on activities throughout the national territory. Even the most sophisticated observer or peacekeeping force will not be able to equal the cohesion of national military systems. Yet these areas are "sensitive" for a reason and it is vital that their inspection take place in the context of the whole peace process as well as of specific provisions of the eventual text of an accord. The list of reasons for which they will be inspecting would be almost as long as the list of security provisions in a peace accord.

The possible establishment of de-militarized zones will require a phased approach. A peacekeeping force would perhaps be required at first and an observer mission later for this undertaking. Particularly on the Honduran border with Nicaragua but also within some countries where insurrections are occurring,

such zones might be useful means to separate actual or potential combattant forces and to act as a wider-ranging CBM. In establishing such zones, however, a significant personnel deployment will likely be necessary and this level of involvement might have to be sustained for some time, especially if uncertainties persist on one or more sides about the use of the zone.

The second stage might require simply an observer mission as the parties to the accord became accustomed to the idea of a de-militarized zone. However, even here the likely size of some such zones could require significant personnel levels to maintain the certainty of their de-militarized status.

Insurgent collection zones have attracted considerable attention since the Sapoá agreement of March 1988. This accord called for several collection zones into which the insurgents would move and eventually disarm, and from which they would finally disperse in order to resume their part in the national economic and political scene. It is difficult to imagine a more potentially thorny peacekeeping responsibility than that of overseeing this sort of provision.

At no stage of the implementation of an accord's provisions would there be so much room for disaster through distrust, fear, excessive zeal or mere sloppiness. Government forces generally despise the insurgents in El Salvador, Guatemala and Nicaragua. Indeed, as is well known, significant elements of the armed forces, particularly in the officer corps of both El Salvador and Guatemala, see peace in any form other than victory as a disaster for their country and for the particular interests to which they are most closely tied. These persons could easily be persuaded that molesting the establishment of insurgent collection zones would easily and effectively sabotage the peace accord as a whole. Even in Nicaragua, hatred for the contras is such that sabotage might be contemplated by some. Nor should one discount the possibility of false allegations on the part of the insurgents.

Even without such determined opposition, however, the task of establishing and maintaining such zones could be a great one and the failure to do so could indeed end the whole accord experiment. Insurgents would have to move, often through government-held territory patrolled by their very recent (at best) enemies, to the zones in question. The temptation for the armed forces "to settle accounts" at this stage could be almost irresistible, even with the cease-fire, especially when the military are provided with pin-pointed insurgent movements. Frayed nerves and loose discipline among troops and local commanders might do the work organized military operations no longer could undertake. Verifying activities in such zones would tie in closely with the verification of a cease-fire in general. Insurgents would be required to move in groups, accompanied by observers. Also needed would be the withdrawal of government forces from these zones. It must be understood, however, that verifying insurgent collection zones may well be the most difficult part of implementing a cease-fire.

Once established, collection zones could possibly be surrounded by demilitarized zones. Tensions might well continue at a high level and checking into complaints could continue to be an absolutely vital role of the peacekeeping force or observer mission there. Given the large size of such zones, and their likely location far from areas of population, they will pose special resource problems for those verifying peace accord provisions related to them.

On the arms trade provisions of an eventual accord, little need be said about verification since it would be relatively straightforward. This is not to say verification would be easy. There would be a requirement to maintain a ship and aircraft inspection capability that would be mobile (most Central American states have several ocean-going ports usually on both the Pacific and Atlantic coasts) and efficient. Again sophistication of weaponry would be the key. Large shipments of heavy equipment, armour for example, should be easy to discover. It is the smaller-scale arrival of highly sophisticated weaponry that could prove more difficult to detect, especially with the long-standing practice and experience had by many in delivering arms illegally to the region, and particularly to its isolated airfields. Sophisticated high-technology equipment might be able to assist with detection but this could depend on great power approval and backing.

United States concerns about the large amounts of military equipment and weapons sent to Nicaragua from Cuba and the Soviet Union would maintain this activity at an even more important level if Washington agrees to an eventual peace accord in the region. A major effort might therefore be deployed in this regard. However, the potential addition of U.S. resources to this arms trade verification tasking would more than make up for the extra workload it might eventually entail.

## Geography

Geography, both physical and political, will pose a major obstacle to the verification of a peace accord. Politically, some six borders pose current or potential concern to a verification regime. They include the very troublesome borders between Nicaragua and Honduras, Honduras and El Salvador, Guatemala and Mexico, and even possibly Guatemala and El Salvador.

The territory of only those countries where insurgent groups are operating, covers some 400 000 km$^2$. Large areas of El Salvador, particularly in the North, are to all intents and purposes governed by the FMLN and not San Salvador. The scope of the verification effort will be vast, even if one does not consider Guatemalan and Costa Rican extensions.

While the Guatemalan insurgents are currently active only in the inaccessible regions of the northern provinces, particularly Petén, the area involved is still very large indeed. And while the Costa Rican boundary with Nicaragua is quiet at the moment, no effective verification system could afford to leave it outside its area of effort.

Thus, an observer mission or peacekeeping force charged with verifying either of the sorts of agreement discussed above, would be dealing with unquestionably the largest and most diverse political and geographical context of any such organization ever established.

## Back-up Political Verification

As mentioned in the last section, verification of the essentially "political" elements of a Central American peace accord could be key to such an agreement's success. This is especially true if United States demands for Nicaraguan "democratization" are to be met and if insurgent groups are to be brought fully into the peace negotiations. While unlikely to be the responsibility of a military observer mission, such a task would almost certainly fall on outside countries to undertake. Indeed, experts on peacekeeping and verification have repeatedly stressed that such international and extra-regional verification responsibilities should be shouldered exclusively by the international community. The fate of Esquipulas' CIVS emphasizes starkly the difficulties of such verification agencies operating in the region.

Democratization and the holding of free elections will require close verification, not just in Nicaragua, but in all countries in the region except Costa Rica. Again the Esquipulas and post-Esquipulas experience with national reconciliation commissions and amnesties justifies considerable scepticism where the ease of such verification is concerned. Free elections, either to national legislatures or to a Central American parliament, also demand observation on the part of one or some international or at lease extra-regional organizations.

Much work remains to be done by the Central American states themselves on what, for example, was actually meant by the democratization, amnesty and free-election provisions of the Esquipulas II agreement. Needless to say, the distance several regimes were prepared to go fell far short of the expectations held by hopeful circles watching the Central American scene from abroad. At a minimum a real national dialogue must be allowed among all legitimate unarmed political groupings. At a maximum, this dialogue could be extended to amnestied or even still resisting groups. The verification of the holding of, and the real openings involved in, those dialogues, would be difficult and extremely delicate. It is a political, not a military requirement, and means that any overall verification effort must include civilian as well as military personnel if its goals are to be brought into the realm of possible attainment. In all of this, the CIVS experience underscores the need for caution and a limit to excessive hopes of rapid and smooth progress. Nonetheless, the CIVS initiative, while criticized by all for incompleteness and by some for bias, was partially successful in demonstrating that such complicated political verification of the Esquipulas II agreement was indeed possible.[6]

The inclusion of the United States will necessitate the closest of verification of any Nicaraguan national dialogue, amnesty and free election provisions. Washington has severely criticized Managua for "bad faith" in its approach to a real dialogue with opposition elements. It has accused the Sandinistas of using the negotiations as a whole as a means of fooling world

Figure 2 Map of Central America

Caribbean Sea
atagalpa
uerto Limón
osé
Panama
David
Panama

opinion about the supposed real, i.e., Marxist and totalitarian, colour of a regime which will never countenance moves to real democracy in the country. The U.S. accuses the FSLN of a sham dialogue, a false amnesty, and a total refusal to move towards truly free elections.

Clearly, then, the requirement for some, conceiveably great, efforts in support of the verification of the political elements of an eventual accord is necessary. "Supporting the Five," the first report of the Canadian House of Commons Special Committee on the Central American Peace Process, mentions that international standards have been developed, at least in embryo, for the observation of elections by international agencies and groups.[7] A larger, more efficient and more permanently structured CIVS-like agency could verify provisions of an accord dealing with amnesties and their application. And finally, further work could be done to produce more stringent and clear definitions of what constitute "free" elections, a "real national dialogue," and a "threat-free" amnesty. Sight should not be lost, however, of the essentially political factors that will affect the elaboration of such definitions: the setting up of a body that will need to monitor political activities, and the functioning of such a body in attempting to carry out its mandate.

Jack Child and the International Peace Academy have developed the most comprehensive list of such potential CBMs.[8] Besides those already mentioned, they include:

1. notification of alert exercises and mobilization drills;
2. notification of naval activities outside of normal areas;
3. notification of aircraft operations and flights near sensitive and border areas;
4. notification of other "out of garrison" military activities that might be misinterpreted;
5. exchanging personnel as students or instructors at military academies, schools and war colleges;
6. exchanging military attachés from all services among all the area countries;
7. setting up joint border patrols along sensitive borders;
8. establishing clear limits on military activities such as mobilization, calling up reserves etc., which could lead to misunderstanding;
9. establishing hotlines not only among heads of state but between chiefs of military forces (or defence ministers) and between units in contact across a border;
10. limiting coded military message traffic;
11. increasing military-to-military contacts through the organs of the Inter-American Military System (Inter-American Defence Board, Inter-American Defence College, Service Chiefs Conferences etc.);
12. encouraging the procurement and deployment of what can be accepted as defensive systems instead of offensive ones;
13. reaching agreement on military levels for weaponry; and
14. exchanging visits by military athletic teams.

A host of more wide-ranging and longer-term suggestions for CBMs have also been advanced and were again summarized by Child. These deal with training and education, the role of the super-powers, expanding the role of CBMs and many other initiatives. The above list is only partial and its components would not necessarily require significant or, in some cases, any verification mechanism. However, it should be clear from the list that even the extensive verification regime required for the accords so far discussed could be expanded dramatically in response to a greater degree of interest in the spreading of confidence-building measures.

# Difficulties of Implementation

Difficulties in implementing the verification provisions of a Central American peace accord will be many, as can be surmised from what has been stated so far. These difficulties can be discussed in three sections: terrain (and climate), political and military complexities, and technical concerns. At each stage the impact of such difficulties on the nature and functioning of a verification agency will be assessed.

*Table 3*

**Key Data on Central American Countries 1987-1988**

| | COSTA RICA | GUATEMALA | HONDURAS | NICARAGUA | EL SALVADOR |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Area | 51 000 km$^2$ | 109 000 km$^2$ | 112 000 km$^2$ | 148 000 km$^2$ | 21 000 km$^2$ |
| Population | 2 600 000 | 8 843 000 | 4 667 000 | 3 408 000 | 5 800 000 |
| Capital | San José | Guatemala | Tegucigalpa | Managua | San Salvador |
| Population Growth (p.a) | 2.7% | 3.4% | 3.5% | 3.4% | 2.5% |
| Gross Domestic Product ($bn U.S.) | 4.1 | 7.8 | 3.74 | 5.34 | 3.98 |

## Terrain and Climate

Of all difficulties associated with the verification of a peace accord in Central America, no factor exceeds in difficulty that of terrain. As shown by the annexed map, Central America is dominated by a central highland belt with coastal areas on both the Pacific Ocean and the Caribbean Sea, which are flatter and can be either plain, forest, or jungle.

This pattern is seen in the north with Guatemala divided into a Pacific coastal belt, a central highland region, and the jungle northern region of Petén. The border regions are generally rugged with only the Pacific border areas with Mexico and El Salvador settled and developed. The northern border with Mexico is dominated by the southern reaches of Mexico's Yucatan jungle and the eastern border with Honduras is hilly with either thick forests in the north or scrub in the centre.

El Salvador has a 400-kilometre-long boundary with Honduras, running through hilly and frequently forested regions. The short west boundary with Guatemala is in the hot, rolling lowlands. In the east, the Gulf of Fonseca separates the country from Nicaragua and helps form the 307-kilometre Pacific coastline of this, the only country in Central America without a Caribbean coast.

Honduras is either mountainous or at least hilly virtually throughout. In the northeast, in the area bordering Nicaragua, it is also heavily forested as are most of the coastal regions and much of the western region bordering with Guatemala. Honduras has the longest borders in Central America. They total 1 530 kilometres of land boundaries (with Guatemala, Nicaragua and El Salvador) and 820 kilometres of coastline. It is therefore exposed to all the countries in the region except Costa Rica and is close to both the Belizean and even the Cuban coasts. Only 72 kilometres of its extensive coastline is on the Pacific but this small strip abuts the Gulf of Fonseca, a strategically important waterway adjoining the coasts of El Salvador and Nicaragua.

Nicaragua's national territory is a mix of a Pacific coastland of plain and low hills, a central mountainous region with the huge Lake Nicaragua and the only slightly less impressive Lake Managua, and a heavily wooded or jungle eastern area. The last of these areas covers a large part of the country and has extremely poor communications. The north is particularly mountainous and hills are widespread throughout Nicaragua. The two lakes mentioned facilitate to some degree potential transport in the central regions but their ease of access could add to control problems on the Costa Rican border, a very short distance to the south of Lake Nicaragua. The troublesome border with Honduras is, as mentioned, mountainous and tends to dense forest there as in the east of the country. The Gulf of Fonseca completes a Pacific coastline running north and west from Costa Rica for several hundred kilometres and which is, even then, not nearly as long as Nicaragua's Caribbean coastline.

Costa Rica, the southern most republic, shares its northern and western border with Nicaragua. It is hilly, heavily forested or jungle in the centre and east, and scrub plain in the west, reflecting the general division of the country into a western coastal plain rising quickly into the high central mountain range and ending in the east with the jungle Caribbean coast. Only the Nicaraguan border has posed problems recently as Panama has kept well out of the Central American embroglio.

The above-mentioned terrain and other factors are added to a less than hospitable climate in most of the Central American region. Generally speaking, the climate is hot. And while the central highland belt to some extent escapes the heat, the Atlantic and Pacific coastal regions are very steamy indeed with high humidity and temperatures the rule. Rainfall is common throughout the region but is particularly heavy in the "rainy season," which varies to some extent in the various countries.

**Figure 3 Terrain in Central America**

The nature of the terrain in Central America greatly complicates verification activities. The photos here illustrate the contrast between the jungle and mountainous terrain of Central America (A and B) and the relatively open desert environment that faces United Nations peacekeepers in the Middle East (C).

A. Mountains and inland waterways dominate much of Central America.

B. Much of the eastern area of the region is dense jungle, here interspersed with Mayan ruins.

C. UN peacekeepers on duty in the Middle East face an entirely different terrain.

## Human and Animal Populations and Transportation Networks

The human population distribution in Central America reflects terrain and climatic conditions. Generally sparse in the Caribbean coastal regions with the exception of the port cities themselves, the population in the western coastal zones is somewhat higher and agricultural exploitation considerably greater.

Capital cities have been founded in the central highlands to escape the torrid coastal zones of both east and west, and population settlement in general has followed this logical trend. Even San Salvador, relatively close to the Pacific coast, is still built at the beginning of the central highland zone.

Animals are plentiful in all of Central America. This wealth of animal life, both wild and domestic, offers a variety of exceptional richness. Domestic animals are a mainstay both of the largely agricultural regional economy and of the transport system in the rural zones. Cattle are very numerous and mules, horses and other farm animals are everywhere in the settled regions of Central America. The mules and horses serve not only as a standard means of transport for the peasantry but also serve as pack animals for both insurgents and government forces in many inhospitable areas.

Wild animals also abound throughout Central America but forest and scrub lands have an especially wide range of types. These may include anteaters, armadillos, bears, coyotes, deer, foxes, jaguars, otters, peccaries, pumas, rodents, sloths, tapirs and wild cats. Crocodiles, iguanas, lizards, turtles and snakes such as rattlers, boa constrictors and pythons inhabit the steamy lowlands and especially the jungle regions. In all areas, both land and water birds are ubiquitous.

The land communication system is not well developed but its condition varies from country to country. The main cities of Guatemala, for example, are linked by fairly good roads, usually paved and continually improving. The Pan-American Highway(PAH) cuts through the country from north-west to south-east and is in very good condition. Another good highway runs through the agriculture-rich lowlands of the Pacific coastal region. In rural areas, including most border zones, however, roads are rare and dirt tracks the rule. Roads to Mexico are very few and concentrated in the Pacific coast area except for the Pan-American Highway itself somewhat farther inland. In the crucial areas of Petén, Alta Verapaz and northern Huehuetenango, roads are virtually non-existent and border control is all but impossible. On the other hand, roads and tracks across the Salvadorean boundary are relatively plentiful with two particularly good highways, one near the Pacific and the other in the centre of the border zone.

El Salvador, as befits a heavily-populated country, has an extensive road network. However, while the south of the country is quite well served, both by the Pan-American Highway and by branch roads running north and south from it, the north is not. There, roads are few but tracks abound, especially important in the border regions with Honduras.

The Honduran transportation system reflects its traditional position as the second poorest country in Latin America. Good roads are lacking except for those linking Tequcigalpa with the Pan-American Highway and the northwestern commercial centre of San Pedro Sula, and the highway itself. Elsewhere there are some adequate roads but these are few and far between. Even tracks are rare in the contra-occupied areas of Gracias a Dios and Olancho, although a reasonable road links the capital with the town of Danli, close to some of the most troubled border zones with Nicaragua.

Nicaragua's road network is also far from well developed. In the vast eastern half of the country, forested or even jungle, roads are terribly poor and nearly non-existent. Even Bluefields, the major Caribbean port, has a merely adequate linkage with the capital. Other towns have much less -- a resultant major factor in the non-incorporation of these areas into the national fabric. In the west, the situation is much better. The Pan-American Highway is supplemented by fairly good, if not plentiful, roads in the coastal belt and linking the main cities of Leon, Managua, Masaya and Granada. Another good road leads north from the capital through the threatened areas east and north of Esteli and Jinotega. As mentioned elsewhere, the great lakes of Managua and Nicaragua facilitate transportation in the country, but also pose special problems for security forces.

Costa Rica has, rather surprisingly given its reputation for public works, an unimpressive road system. The peculiar organization of the administrative divisions of the country, as well as other terrain, population and political factors, have brought about a situation where the central plateau is well served with roads while the rest of the country, except for where the Pan-American Highway passes, is much less so. The main cities of the plateau (i.e., Alajuela, Heredia, Cartago and San José itself) are linked with very good roads. Another good road supplements the railway line to the Caribbean port of Limon. Elsewhere paved roads are rare and, as seen in the contra difficulties on the Nicaraguan border earlier in this decade, land transport is difficult and only the track system is at all developed.

The impact of all these terrain, climate and related conditions will be great on elements of a verification organization deployed on the ground. Transportation is very difficult, especially in the border areas so often the haven and operating areas of insurgent groups. However, mobility will be vital for a huge range of the verification activities likely to be included in an eventual peace accord, even a "minimalist" one. Over such considerable distances, quite vast areas, and under the road, terrain, weather and other circumstances discussed, useful mobility in a "real time" sense will require dispersal of human resources, a recourse to technical means to assist in verification, and the provision of significant over-land (probably jeep or Land Rover) and above-land transport, especially helicopters.

The requirement for dispersal will require larger numbers of personnel, particularly for the security elements of a peace accord. Rugged countryside will pose barriers to movement and will exhaust both personnel and equipment more quickly than would operations under better conditions. Even equipment representing the latest in high technology will likely suffer from the disadvantages of hilly or mountainous terrain, large-scale movement of humans and animals, and harsh weather especially great heat and sustained heavy rainfall. The fact that sensitive areas tend to be large, far away from cities or even towns, in very rugged country indeed, and where transportation is at a minimum even by Central American standards, cannot be exaggerated in its importance for such an international agency.

## Complexity

As has been emphasized throughout this paper, the complexity of verifying the myriad likely objects subject to verification among the provisions of a Central American peace accord could, quite literally, boggle the mind. By far the bulk of these complicating factors are "political," but this explains little because, in any conceivable Central American verification arrangement, virtually everything has a pronounced political dimension.

The especially "political" aspects remain, however, those already mentioned under political verification; that is, the provisions of the Contadora Draft Act, the Esquipulas II accord, or the Sapoá agreement that deal with democratization, national dialogues and reconciliation, amnesties and elections. No previous verification regime has had to deal with these issues in such abundance. In effect, a separate verification effort, largely diplomatic and legal, is required to implement such a regime. Even then, delicate attention would need to be given to its formation and even more delicacy to its functioning.

The sheer breadth of the accords signed or contemplated span a host of major issues and immense problem areas. One has merely to remember, in Esquipulas II for example, the refugee and security provisions, not to mention the political ones just pointed out again. In designing a verification regime, flexibility will have to be built in if it is to address the inevitable growth of responsibilities it will confront as personnel are deployed.

Another enormous problem, but one which is difficult to judge at this stage, is the possible hostility of the United States. The value of super-power assistance in peacekeeping and verification is hard to exaggerate. Such a military power can provide some high-technology assistance, possibly including information from satellites passing over sensitive areas; it can provide sea and air transport facilities for the forces deployed on the ground; it can assist with communications; in short it can simplify greatly the establishment of a verification regime and can provide needed financial support for the endeavour.

Alas, United States support for the peace process in Central America has so far been lukewarm at best. Seeing the Sandinista government as an enemy with which it did not wish to deal, Washington has repeatedly attempted to block progress on accords which it feels strengthen the Managua regime's hand and give it increased international recognition and credibility. The U.S. has put substantial pressure on both Honduras and El Salvador to block the progress of negotiations which it feels will hurt United States interests.

Even if United States opposition is insufficient to halt an agreement, as was the case at least temporarily with Esquipulas II, its unwillingness to support it, and perhaps even its continued attempts to undermine it, could prove the end to real progress toward regional peace. As the regional super-power, the damage the U.S. can do to an accord's success is very great indeed. Nor is there any other obvious third party that would be able to provide significant incentives and disincentives on regional actors to push them along to an agreement and to keep them at the job of making it work.

Only a determined international organization, with great support from a wide range of countries, or a new consortium of significant countries with a stake in peace in the region, could hope to do without the United States in such an endeavour as establishing a major peacekeeping and verification regime in Central America.

In general, United Nations' initiatives in Latin America are not welcomed by the United States. Organization of American States initiatives, on the other hand, are considered suspicious by elements on the left in Latin America. Despite this reluctance, however, joint UN/OAS activities have occurred in support of all three sets of negotiations discussed here so there is room for some hope. No consortium of states seems to be forming outside these two international bodies, however, because of fears of getting too deeply involved in the regional imbroglio, because of concerns over U.S. reaction to such a consortium, and because of worries over the financial and other resource commitments involved.

A new administration in Washington could, of course, change all this. A United States government willing to negotiate and live with a Sandinista regime in Nicaragua would be able to stimulate the Salvadorean and Honduran will to peace, calm Managua's fears of imminent U.S. military attack, and provide the technical, logistic and financial support necessary for the implementation of eventual peace accords. Without such a change in United States attitude, however, prospects for success are very much dimmer.

Cost considerations for a verification regime are, of course, extremely important. The three countries so far showing the greatest willingness to participate in a peacekeeping and verification regime have been West Germany, Spain and Canada. Norway, which appeared interested, seems to have given up the idea in the face of what appear to be Salvadorean objections. However, neither Bonn, Madrid nor Ottawa can see itself affording to pay the costs of such an initiative. Indeed, all three show reluctance to be "forward" where financial considerations are concerned.

It is unlikely that these three countries alone would have the wherewithal to provide for the financial and other resource costs entailed in a major verification regime. While the Federal Republic certainly has considerable financial resources on which to draw, it can hardly be expected to pay excessively for an activity far from its shores and from whose effects it will perhaps only marginally benefit. Canada would, wisely it is felt, be reluctant to be seen as the main pillar of a peacekeeping and verification regime in Central America which was expensive and which Washington saw as being opposed to United States vital interests. Spain has not the financial resources at this time to undertake what might seem a nearly open-ended commitment to supporting the peace process in Central America. Even all three acting jointly would possibly find the economic burden a great one when considered against the indirect benefits accruing to them. Further countries would be required to pay if the initiative were to bear fruit.

Likewise, troops, light fixed-wing aircraft or helicopters, and patrol vehicles would be needed in considerable numbers. West Germany has all of these but is currently prevented by its constitution from deploying them abroad. Spain has large armed forces with a reasonable number of aircraft and vehicles of the required type, but is itself in the process of switching its past internal security role over to a NATO defence role, and wishes to contribute its best formations to alliance priorities. Canada has forces much smaller than in the hey-day of peacekeeping and is already over-stretched in support of such efforts as well as its alliance commitments. Thus it would be with the greatest of difficulty that these three countries, acting alone, could provide the military resources necessary for such a complicated and wide-ranging verification and peacekeeping effort. Here again, help from elsewhere would be required.

Four other European countries have frequently been mentioned as potential sources of assistance with the military requirements of a verification and peacekeeping regime. These are Austria, Italy, Sweden and the Netherlands. Sweden has a great deal of peacekeeping experience and considerable equipment resources, and might well be willing to help. On the other hand, its recent withdrawal from the Cyprus peacekeeping force and its defence budget cuts perhaps augur ill for a Swedish role in Central America. Austria's forces have had less, but still some, peacekeeping experience. However, they are small and Vienna has so far shown little interest in the Central American crisis. Italy, while not having much experience in this type of operation, has large and well-equipped armed forces that could assist tremendously. While Rome has so far not been overly forthcoming, its interests in Central America are real (El Salvador is the number one destination for Italian foreign aid) and it might be willing to join a consortium of states acting together in the region, as might the Netherlands, whose forces would also be useful.

South American states have also been pointed out as likely candidates for such a role. Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Venezuela are the most frequently cited. During its years as a military dictatorship, Argentina's forces got a bad name in Central America and the Alfonsin government might well be interested in doing

something to dispel this image. However, Argentine financial resources are such that unless someone else assisted in paying for the deployment of such forces, it would be hard pressed to do much. Brazil has even more military resources than Argentina, has some peacekeeping experience and, as a member of the Contadora Support Group, is also interested in bringing about peace in Central America. While not so badly off economically as Argentina, Brazil also would have difficulties with the price tag for such involvement. Peru's troubles with the Sendero Luminoso guerillas may well preclude Lima's participation in peacekeeping and verification duties in Central America, but this is not certain.

Venezuela is perhaps the only Contadora state which could and would assist with military resources in Central America. Mexico, considered the "colossus of the North" by the Central Americans, is suspected by many of them to be harbouring its own designs on the region. Colombia's army is fully occupied in combatting the guerillas in its own country. Panama's forces may have their hands full just propping up the regime. Venezuela, however, has no internal security problems and has frequently in the recent past shown an interest in a more enlarged regional role in the Caribbean Basin. Its forces are significant and reasonably well equipped even if they have rather little relevant experience.

Thus, there are many question marks on who might be willing to assist, in what ways they could do so, and under what financial circumstances. Each national force added to the international force will add to the political, and probably the economic, viability of the operation but will probably further complicate its activities on the ground. Linguistic problems alone could be serious. Many of the operations involved with the verification provisions would frequently require delicate on-the-spot handling. Few non-Spanish speaking countries' forces could provide significant numbers of personnel speaking the local language. The West German army, even if it could send such personnel, has few of them. The Canadian Armed Forces are sadly lacking in personnel who can speak Spanish. And while obviously Spain could help in alleviating this problem, Madrid cannot be expected to accept gladly the burden of responsibility when local conditions get out of hand. Spanish American, and to some extent, Italian and Portuguese personnel would be particularly helpful in this regard.

The variety of groupings with which an international force would have to deal is also a daunting prospect. Many of these groups are armed and it is likely that far from all will be pleased with the peace accords. "Political" and security provision verification will bring international force military and civilian personnel into contact with political parties, an array of leftist guerilla organizations, semi-legal parties and organizations, armed rightist movements of ferocious determination, military forces and government officials. Previous peacekeeping and verification forces have generally found that a fraction of this plethora of groupings was enough to keep them busy and necessarily alert. Tact, understanding and resolve will be a combination without which the peace effort will be hamstrung.

In the light of the above, inspection and observer teams will have to be chosen with great care. As mentioned in the Ethell paper, their mandate, as well as that of the international forces as a whole, will have to be clear and well-defined. What they are there to achieve and what the limits are regarding the means they can use – both must be known to all. Difficulties with ensuring impartiality must be addressed immediately. For example, officers of some, especially Latin American, forces deployed may have considerable sympathy with rightist governments, parties and forces in the region. This could complicate matters if not worked out as soon as possible.

However, far beyond these issues related to the complexity of the peacekeeping and verification job at hand is the underlying difficulty of the whole peace process, a complicating problem which may only appear to go away with the signing of a peace accord. This point refers to the unpalatable but stark fact that the "will to peace" among the region's governments and guerilla groups is neither unanimous nor strong. Major elements of all four conservative governments, especially those of El Salvador and Honduras, fear peace if it leads to a decline in United States concern for what happens in the region. All four depend to some extent, and most to a very great degree, on United States economic and military assistance. This dependence has brought the comment recently that these states are no longer "banana" republics but "aid" republics, dependent for their survival no longer on one export crop but on U.S. assistance.

If the U.S. stake in Central America declines through a peace accord, particularly one with which Washington is at variance, then the region's governments could find themselves in a desperate economic and social situation virtually immediately. For these governments peace, however tempting, is only worthwhile if U.S. involvement and interest in their countries' affairs can be guaranteed after it is achieved. In addition, some rebel groupings have settled down to a fairly comfortable level of fighting, and live in relative ease in their inaccessible regions. They have accepted the need for a "protracted struggle" and are not necessarily happy with the idea of a politically costly compromise with the government in the interests of peace. While circumstances may force these governments and guerillas to sign an accord, this background where a will to peace is not necessarily strong could complicate the long-term, and even short-term, achievement of an enduring peaceful settlement.

## Technical Considerations

The complicating factors for an accord's verification and sustenance are all very real considerations for those working on Central American peace. They, and perhaps even more so the terrain and climatic factors discussed, will affect greatly a number of the elements of any verification regime. There is no doubt that the complexities and difficulties involved will require a multi-dimensional verification system that makes maximum use of high technology and other technical means to supplement the work of personnel on the ground. While technical means may not prove so necessary in the case of "political" verification, they will be essential for verifying security provisions of any agreement. And these security provisions will have their political impact. Nor should one be overly certain of the costs of replacing manpower with technology. The development and deployment of sophisticated technical means of verification can be extremely expensive and, while no doubt helpful in many areas, may not be cost-effective in others.

The areas of general applicability to verification regimes brought out in Dr. Brian Mandell's recent Sinai paper can be used to suggest the areas of technical challenge that need to be addressed.[9] Thus, the next sections look at area coverage; detection, discrimination and sensors; communications and reporting; control; ease of operation and maintenance; data preservation and distribution; and false alarm visits.

### Area Coverage

The vast areas and difficult terrain conditions involved in the Honduran/Nicaraguan and Salvadorean/Honduran border regions -- without considering those of Costa Rica/Nicaragua, El Salvador/Guatemala, and Guatemala/Mexico -- pose a major verification problem in terms of area coverage. Many tens of thousands of square kilometres of mountainous and frequently forested land are of concern here, as well as huge lakes, long rivers, wide air spaces, and so on. The inhospitable and inaccessible nature of these areas will mean that a verification region will ideally, and indeed must, depend on a mix of flexible, mobile and light inspection/observer teams backed up by higher technology machinery which could perhaps take some of the otherwise impossible burden off the personnel resources available.

In any case a large force will be needed on the ground for the reasons mentioned above and related to the scope and dispersal of the likely jobs of verification to be done. However, to keep this force from reaching tremendous proportions, technology could conceivably provide some of the answers. Ideally, satellite and reconnaissance aircraft overflights would help immensely. They would be supplemented by a variety of ground and probably sea-based sensors

which would give maximum coverage of activity in the huge but sensitive border regions, key bodies of water, de-militarized zones, guerilla collection zones, and the like.

## Detection, Discrimination and Sensors

Detection of the movement of groups of men may be rendered difficult by low-lying cloud, lengthy annual seasons of what can often be very heavy rain, mountanous terrain and heavy foliage. The size of the area in question, and the tremendous variety of possible landing places for light aircraft, would make such airplanes also difficult to detect. Technological means should help with these difficulties but the problems with air operations, particularly airborne surveillance, are considerable under these sorts of conditions.

Given frequent and often heavy civilian foot and vehicle traffic, as well as animals moving about, there is a danger of highly unfavourable signal-to-noise ratios in much of the Central American region to be covered. All sorts of noise and clutter may tend to activate ground sensors unless their sophistication were extraordinary. Added to frequently poor weather conditions for air and space surveillance missions, these noise factors, as well as those of neighbouring rivers, forests, jungles and mountains, may make for an over-taxed detection system. Difficulties of transport, climate, terrain and foliage will also mean a demand for sensors which are sturdy, resistant, flexible and easy to conceal.

## Communications and Reporting

Communications will suffer from distance, high and common mountains, poor transportation possibilities, and unsettled weather patterns. As a result, reporting of incidents can be expected to be less than fully efficient. Line-of-sight systems would often be virtually useless and equipment would need to be de-centralized and organized to permit maximum relay potential. As with sensors, communications equipment would need to be robust and resistant.

The large number of likely stations on such a net, reflecting the dispersal of small teams and groups over a large area and on a number of simultaneous missions, will require equipment aimed at this function. It would appear that only the use of sophisticated high technology will offer effective means to provide personnel on the ground, in the air, and on the sea, with the communications required under Central American conditions. When these matters are added to inter-governmental "hotline," inter-staff, and other communications needs, it becomes clear that the "signals" component of such a verification regime would be considerable.

## Control

The verification system -- involving as it would at least hundreds of personnel, vehicles, aircraft, ships, equipment, weapons, communications, logistic support and the like -- will need close control, particularly under the complex political circumstances to be foreseen following a Central American peace accord. The scope of the system spread out over vast distances and over several mutually-suspicious countries, will make that control difficult to exercise, as will the presence of the civil population, animals and possibly hostile armed forces and groups, not to mention the potential for terrorist acts perpetrated by those opposing the accords.

To ensure that the mission is accomplished, despite its complexity and obstacles, will be no easy task. The need for close control can only be met by a clear mandate, co-operation from the contending parties, careful selection of personnel, a clear chain of command, and an excellent system of communications. With at least this last element, high technology should be able to assist.

## Ease of Operation and Maintenance

The terrain of greatest sensitivity is often a vast and complex mix of criss-crossing mountain and jungle tracks. Its interest as an area of operations for insurgents comes, of course, from its isolation and difficulty of access. Unfortunately, these factors will complicate the work of verification teams. They will also make much more difficult the choice of where to place sensors, should such an option appear useful in particular areas.

Most sensors' usefulness will be greatly diminished when used in rolling country. Forests also detract from their efficiency, not only through extraneous noise but through density of foliage. Tracks are nearly always winding in the extreme and the combination of all these points reduces sensor value; and usually suggests that greater numbers and varieties of sensors be put in place to cover the area targetted.

All of this complicates not just the placement of sensors but also their operation and maintenance. It is difficult to be at all certain if higher levels of technology will be able to assist with this problem but, if they can, they will be greatly needed in Central America.

## Data Preservation, Distribution and False Alarms

The various elements of the verification infrastructure will be producing data of some kind on a fairly constant basis. In addition, the verification organization will have a major role in distributing CBM-related data among governments, armed forces headquarters, and possibly irregular armed groups. Long distances and difficult communications, as well as rugged terrain and harsh weather, will conspire to damage data and render their handling and distribution problematical. Systems will be needed to preserve and distribute data in a timely and secure fashion and this also may require a special degree of sophistication in the design of appropriate systems.

Lastly, and related to detection, is the thorny problem of false alarms. As can be easily imagined -- given communications difficulties, the circumstances surrounding sensor placement and operation, civilian peasant and animal movements, extraneous noise and the overall size of the area in question -- it is to be expected that the false alarm rate will be high.

Investigating false alarms, given the conditions under which the verification organization is working, may be difficult and, in the long run, may cause exhaustion among personnel. Follow-up missions of all kinds may prove long, tiring, costly, and periodically even impossible to achieve given ground and weather conditions. Unless a large number of personnel is available, or technical means to assist here as well can be found, this problem may be extremely difficult to resolve. Indeed, pressed by over-tasking and under-staffing, the teams may find that by the time they can respond to an alert, they may not be able to determine the cause of the "anomaly."

On all of these matters the co-operation of local armed forces and government could help greatly and is to be hoped for. However, the Central American republics have less than fully developed national infrastructures as it is, and war has taken its toll on them. Therefore it would be unwise to take much for granted where infrastucture is concerned. Given the problems of manning a sizeable force however, it is to be hoped that technology will assist in providing as multi-dimensional a system as possible.

# Conclusions

This paper has identified and briefly assessed the likely verification requirements, in a general way, of a possible Central American peace accord, and elaborated somewhat upon potential implementation problems. In doing so, two types of agreement have been assessed -- one with "minimalist" aims and one with "maximalist" aims.

A picture emerges in the first case of a requirement for a wide range of security-related verification provisions involving an array of mechanisms for monitoring compliance with an eventual accord. In this minimalist agreement, political elements, and their monitoring, would be perhaps somewhat less dramatic than those set out in Esquipulas II, for example. They would still exist, however, and would require some verification.

Much more dramatic, however, would be the security-related elements of such an agreement. These would be complex, wide-ranging and would require an extraordinarily elaborate verification regime, almost certainly established in connection with an international peacekeeping organization of a significant size. This peacekeeping organization would be of at least major observer mission size but would more than likely require a peacekeeping force to at least temporarily insert itself between hostile forces, and perhaps establish de-militarized zones and areas of collection for dissident armed groups.

An elaborate range of confidence-building measures can be envisaged in the context of this type of accord. Many of these, as seen above, would have a verification aspect, especially where sensitive areas are concerned. The size and terrain of areas likely to be considered sensitive make for a daunting verification task even without considering the tremendous political complexities that would affect the work of a monitoring body in the region.

In the case of a "maximalist" accord, some further security-related verification responsibilities would be envisaged to make the agreement tighter and more complete. The difficulties in achieving an accord which pushes forward the greatest distance possible the goals of the regional peace process mean that some of the political issues, such as democratization and the conditions of the regional super-power's acceptance of peace in the area, are here addressed and not in the "minimalist" accord. The bulk of the new responsibilities are for political verification, almost certainly by a smaller group of people than would be involved in the security provisions verification, and made up of more specialized civilian personnel. Their task would be a delicate one, involving a close knowledge of the political scene in the area. They would, as opposed to the CIVS experience, need time, staff, and a continuous and clear mandate for reporting on what they have discovered regarding the application of the accord's provisions.

Both types of accord, demand a considerable force on the ground to verify the cease-fire and related security provisions. Again this requirement results from reasons of terrain and dispersal of local forces. In the view of this author such a force would have to be considerably larger than those suggested up to now. The size of this force would depend upon the extent to which local conditions improve but even more so upon how far insurgent groups are willing to go in accepting an accord. Probably in Costa Rica, and possibly in Guatemala, depending on negotiations with the insurgents, the observer force's strength could be in the range of those set out by Lieutenant-Colonel Ethell's paper, say 31 and 33 officers respectively. Disengagement, cease-fire and other responsibilities in El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua, on the other hand, would suggest considerably larger deployments in those countries if the job is to be done properly. More dispersed personnel operating in the sensitive areas will be needed since capitals are too far away and these areas are very difficult to access. Significant levels of all-weather vehicles and helicopters would need to be available if this force's verification role is to be a credible one and thus of use in the suspicion-charged atmosphere of Central America.

As has been seen, the Central American situation offers a scene where ideas abound for confidence-building measures, risk management, and furthering peace in general. That very abundance of ideas, however, leads to very complicated verification arrangements that must be properly implemented if they are not to run the risk of endangering the peace process, rather than helping it along.

There is, of course, a Central American peace agreement at the moment. The Esquipulas II accord may well still prove the beginning of a series of real negotiations for peace in Guatemala and El Salvador as it appeared to have done in Nicaragua. However, at the moment Esquipulas II is in trouble, and its security aspects, left largely still with Contadora, are doubly so. Nor does the Sapoá agreement, allowed for by the opening of "political space" by Esquipulas II, seem problem-free, as is more than obvious. This paper has then opted to look at what would be likely to survive in any successful peace accord, as well as what would be needed for a more complete one which continued with political objectives such as democratization as well as attempting to draw in the United States.

Further research work could help in discovering the likely levels of military force, and types of weaponry, that could at a minimum give regional states and the United States a sense of security while not appearing to threaten others. Secondly, the kinds of technical means that might best assist in the verification process described here need further study by experts. Thirdly, the implications for Canada of involvement at a higher level in the Central American peace process need closer examination within the context of national objectives and resources, as well as those more specifically of the departments of External Affairs and National Defence. Finally, useful areas for "étapiste" initiatives need to be identified and evaluated.

Events in Central America moved quickly after the Esquipulas II agreement in August 1987. More recently, pessimism has again been gaining ground as the peace process seemed to stall. The problem remains above all the relative lack of a real "will to peace" among key political actors within the region and outside it. If there is to be a resumption of the initiatives in favour of peace in the area, it will require convincing these key political actors that they have more to gain from peace than from continued war. The role of verification in the acceptance by all parties of a peace agreement is simply vital, as is now generally agreed among the five republics. This paper has shown what kind of verification might be possible and what difficulties it might encounter, always keeping in mind that discussing verification without a specific agreement to which to refer is not an easy task.

## NOTES

1. Jozef Goldblat and Victor Millan, "Arms Control in Central America," *Arms Control*, VIII, 1, (May 1987), p. 78.

2. Canada, Department of External Affairs, "Verification in All Its Aspects," (1986), p. 3.

3. Canada, House of Commons Special Committee on the Peace Process in Central America, "Supporting the Five," (Ottawa, 1988), p. 2.

4. Liisa North, "Measures for Peace in Central America," (Ottawa, Canadian Institute for International Peace and Security, 1987), pp. 32-34.

5. Lieutenant-Colonel D.S. Ethell, "Central America Peacekeeping Observation Organization,"(unpublished draft paper, Ottawa), p. 8. It should be emphasized that the author was responding in this draft to the need felt at the time to have an idea of what might be involved in supporting Esquipulas II.

6. See for example Maria Elena Matheus, "Juicio a Esquipulas II," and Rigoberto Cornejo, " ¿ Balance del proceso de Esquipulas II: Apariencia o realidad?" both in *Análisis*, I,(January, 1988).

7. International Human Rights Law Group, "Guidelines for International Election Observing," (Washington, 1984).

8. Listed and discussed in Jack Child, ed., *Conflict in Central America*, (New York, St. Martin's Press, 1987).

9. Brian Mandell, "The Sinai Experience: Lessons in Multimethod Arms Control Verification and Risk Management," Arms Control Verification Studies, no. 3. (Ottawa, Department of External Affairs, 1987).

# *Annex A*

## Key Verification Elements
## Contadora Draft Act 1986

*(Extracts)*

...

### PART I -- Commitments

...

**CHAPTER III**

***Section 1. COMMITMENTS WITH REGARD TO MILITARY MANOEUVRES***

16. To comply with the following provisions as regards the holding of national military manoeuvres, with effect from the entry into force of this Act:

a) When national military manoeuvres are held in areas less than 30 kilometres from the territory of another State, the appropriate prior notification to the other States Parties and the Verification and Control Commission, mentioned in Part II of this Act, shall be made at least 30 days beforehand.

b) The notification shall contain the following information:

(1) Name;
(2) Purpose;
(3) Participating troops, units, and forces;
(4) Area where the manoeuvre is scheduled;
(5) Program and timetable;
(6) Equipment and weapons to be used.

c) Invitations shall be issued to observers from neighbouring States Parties.

17. To comply with the following provisions as regards the holding of international military manoeuvres in their respective territories:

1. From the entry into force of this Act and for a period of 90 days, the holding of international military manoeuvres involving the presence on their respective territories of armed forces belonging to States outside the Central American region shall be suspended.

2. After 90 days, the Parties by mutual agreement, and taking into account the recommendations of the Verification and Control Commission, can continue the suspension of international military manoeuvres until the maximum limits for armaments and troop strength provided for in paragraph 19 of the Chapter are reached. If there is no agreement on continuing the suspension, international military manoeuvres shall be subject during this period to the following provisions:

(a) The Parties shall ensure that manoeuvres involve no form of intimidation against a Central American State or any other State;

(b) They shall give at least 30 days' notice of the holding of manoeuvres to the States Parties and the Verification and Control Commission referred to in Part II of this Act. The notification shall contain the following information:

(1) Name;
(2) Purpose;
(3) Participating States;
(4) Participating troops, units, and forces;
(5) Area where the manoeuvre is scheduled;
(6) Program and timetable;
(7) Equipment and weapons to be used.

(c) They shall not be held within a zone situated less than 50 kilometres from the territory of a State that is not participating, unless that State gives its express consent;

(d) The Parties shall limit manoeuvres to one a year; it shall last not longer than 15 days;

(e) They shall limit to 3 000 the total number of military troops participating in a manoeuvre. Under no circumstances shall the number of troops of other States exceed the number of nationals participating in a manoeuvre;

(f) Observers from the States Parties shall be invited;

(g) A State Party which believes that there has been a violation of the above provisions may resort to the Verification and Control Commission.

3. International military manoeuvres involving the participation of States ouside the Central American region shall be prohibited once the maximum limits for armaments and troop strength agreed by the Parties have been reached, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 19 of this Chapter.

4. The holding of international manoeuvres with the participation exclusively of Central American States in their respective territories shall be subject to the following provisions from the date of the entry into force of this Act:

   (a) The participating States shall give at least 45 days' notice of the holding of manoeuvres to the States Parties and to the Verification and Control Commission referred to in Part II of this Act. The notification shall contain the following information:

      (1) Name;
      (2) Purpose;
      (3) Participating States;
      (4) Participating troops, units, and forces;
      (5) Area where the manoeuvre is scheduled;
      (6) Program and timetable;
      (7) Equipment and weapons to be used.

   (b) The manoeuvres shall not be held within a zone situated less than 40 kilometres from the territory of a State that is not participating, unless that State gives its express consent;

   (c) The Parties shall limit manoeuvres to 30 days a year; if there is more than one manoeuvre per year each one shall last not longer than 15 days;

   (d) They shall limit to 4 000 the total number of military troops participating in a manoeuvre;

   (e) Observers from the States Parties shall be invited;

   (f) A State Party which believes that there has been a violation of the above provisions may resort to the Verification and Control Commission.

5. The commitments regarding international military manoeuvres shall be subject to those established in paragraph 19 of this Chapter.

***Section 2. COMMITMENTS WITH REGARD TO ARMAMENTS AND TROOP STRENGTH***

18. To halt the arms race in all its forms, and begin immediately negotiations on the control and reduction of the current inventory of weapons, as well as on the number of troops under arms, with the object of establishing a reasonable balance of forces in the area.

19. On the basis of the foregoing, the Parties agree on the following implementation stages:

FIRST STAGE:

a) The Parties undertake not to acquire, after the date of the entry into force of the Act, any more military materiel, with the exception of replenishment supplies, ammunition and spare parts needed to keep existing materiel in operation, and not to increase their military forces, pending the establishment of the maximum limits for military development within the time-limit stipulated for the second stage.

b) The Parties undertake to submit simultaneously to the Verification and Control Commission their respective current inventories of weapons, military installations and troops under arms within 15 days of the entry into force of this Act.

The inventories shall be prepared in accordance with the definitions and basic criteria contained in the Annex to this Act;

c) Within 60 days of the entry into force of this Act, the Verification and Control Commission shall conclude the technical studies and shall suggest to the States Parties, without prejudice to any negotiations which they have agreed to initiate, the maximum limits for their military development, in accordance with the basic criteria laid down in paragraph 20 of this section and in accordance with the respective timetables for reduction and dismantling.

SECOND STAGE:

After a period of 60 days from the entry into force of this Act, the Parties shall establish within the following 30 days:

a) Maximum limits for the types of weapons classified in the annex to this Act, as well as timetables for their reduction;

b) Maximum limits for troops and military installations which each Party may have, as well as timetables for their reduction or dismantling;

c) If the Parties do not reach agreement on the above-mentioned maximum limits and timetables within such period, those suggested by the Verification and Control Commission in its technical studies shall apply provisionally, with the prior consent of the Parties. The Parties shall set by mutual agreement a new time-limit for the negotiation and establishment of the above-mentioned limits.

In case the Parties fail to reach agreement on maximum limits, they shall suspend implementation of the commitments with regard to international military manoeuvres, foreign military bases and installations, and foreign military advisers for which time-limits have been set in the Act, except in those cases where the Parties agree otherwise.

The maximum limits referred to in subparagraphs a), b) and c) and the timetables shall be regarded as an integral part of this Act and shall have the same legally binding force from the day after the completion of the 30 days of the second stage, or on the day after they have been established by agreement among the Parties.

Unless the Parties agree otherwise, the maximum agreed limits set in subparagraph c) shall be reached in 180 days from the entry into force of the Act or in a period established by the Parties.

20. In order to satisfy the requirements of peace, stability, security and economic and social development of the countries of the region, and in order to establish the maximum limits for the military development of the Central American countries and to regulate and reduce their military establishments, the Parties will agree on a table of values that will consider the following basic criteria, and in which all armaments will be subject to regulation and reduction:

1) Security needs and defense capacity of every Central American State;

2) Extent of the territory and population;

3) Range and characteristics of its borders;

4) Military expenditure in relation to gross domestic product (GDP);

5) Military budget in relation to public expenditure and other social indicators;

6) Military technology, relative combat capability, troops, quality and quantity of installations and military assets;

7) Armament subject to control; armament subject to reduction;

8) The foreign military presence and foreign military advisers in each Central American State.

21. Not to introduce new weapons systems that alter the quality or quantity of current inventories of war *materiel*.

22. Not to introduce, possess or use lethal chemical weapons or biological, radiological or other weapons which may be deemed to be excessively injurious or to have indiscriminate effects.

23. Not to permit the transit, stationing, mobilization or any other form of utilization of their territories by foreign armed forces whose actions could mean a threat to the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity of any Central American State.

24. To initiate constitutional procedures so as to be in a position to sign, ratify or accede to treaties and other international agreements on disarmament, if they have not already done so.

*Section 3. COMMITMENTS WITH REGARD TO FOREIGN MILITARY BASES*

25. To close down any foreign military bases, schools or installations in their respective territories, as defined in paragraphs 11, 12 and 13 of the annex within 180 days of the signing of this Act. For that purpose, the Parties undertake to submit simultaneously to the Verification and Control Commission, within 15 days of the signing of this Act, a list of such foreign military bases, schools or installations, which shall be prepared in accordance with the criteria set forth in the above-mentioned paragraphs of the Annex.

26. Not to authorize in their respective territories the establishment of foreign bases, schools or other installations of a military nature.

*Section 4. COMMITMENTS WITH REGARD TO FOREIGN MILITARY ADVISERS*

27. To submit to the Verification and Control Commission a list of any foreign military advisers or other foreign elements participating in military, paramilitary and security activities in their territory, within 15 days of the signing of this Act. In the preparation of the list, account shall be taken of the definitions set forth in paragraph 14 of the Annex.

28. To withdraw, within a period of not more than 180 days from the signing of this Act and in accordance with the studies and recommendations of the Verification and Control Commission, any foreign military advisers and other foreign elements likely to participate in military, paramilitary and security activities.

29. As for advisers performing technical functions related to the installation and maintenance of military equipment, a control register shall be maintained in accordance with the terms laid down in the respective contracts or agreements. On the basis of that register, the Verification and Control Commission shall propose to the Parties reasonable limits on the number of such advisers, within the time-limit established in paragraph 27 above. The agreed limits shall form an integral part of the Act.

***Section 5. COMMITMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE TRAFFIC IN ARMS***

30. To stop the illegal flow of arms, as defined in paragraph 15 of the Annex, towards persons, organizations, irregular forces or armed bands trying to destabilize the Governments of the States Parties.

31. To establish for that purpose control mechanisms at airports, landing strips, harbours, terminals and border crossings, on road, air routes, sea lanes and waterways, and at any other point or in any other area likely to be used for the traffic in arms.

32. On the basis of presumption or established facts, to report any violations to the Verification and Control Commission, with sufficient evidence to enable it to carry out the necessary investigation and submit such conclusions and recommendations as it may consider useful.

***Section 6. COMMITMENTS WITH REGARD TO THE PROHIBITION OF SUPPORT FOR IRREGULAR FORCES***

33. To refrain from giving any political, military, financial or other support to individuals, groups, irregular forces or armed bands advocating the overthrow or destabilization of other Governments, and to prevent, by all means at their disposal, the use of their territory for attacks on another State or for the organization of attacks, acts of sabotage, kidnappings or criminal activities in the territory of another State.

34. To exercise strict control over their respective borders, with a view to preventing their own territory from being used to carry out any military action against a neighbouring State.

35. To deny the use of and dismantle installations, equipment and facilities providing logistical support or serving operational functions in their territory, if the latter is used for acts against neighbouring Governments.

36. To disarm and remove from the border area any group or irregular force identified as being responsible for acts against a neighbouring State. Once the irregular forces have been disbanded, to proceed, with the financial and logistical support of international organizations and Governments interested in bringing peace to Central America, to relocate them or return them to their respective countries, in accordance with the conditions laid down by the Governements concerned.

37. On the basis of presumption or established facts, to report any violations to the Verification and Control Commission, with sufficient evidence to enable it to carry out the necessary investigation and submit such conclusions and recommendations as it may consider useful.

***Section 7. COMMITMENTS WITH REGARD TO TERRORISM***

38. To refrain from giving political, military, financial or any other support for acts of subversion, terrorism or sabotage intended to destabilize or overthrow Governments of the region.

39. To refrain from organizing, instigating or participating in acts of terrorism, subversion or sabotage in another State, or acquiescing in organized activities within their territory directed towards the commission of such criminal acts.

40. To abide by the following treaties and international agreements:

a) The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft, 1970;

b) The Convention to prevent and punish the acts of terrorism taking the form of crimes against persons and related extortion that are of international significance, 1971;

c) The Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Civil Aviation, 1971;

d) The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of Crimes against Internationally Protected Persons, including Diplomatic Agents, 1973;

e) The International Convention against the Taking of Hostages, 1979.

41. To initiate constitutional procedures so as to be in a position to sign, ratify or accede to the treaties and international agreements referred to in the preceding paragraph, if they have not already done so.

42. To prevent in their respective territories the planning or commission of criminal acts against other States or the nationals of such States by terrorist groups or organizations. To that end, they shall strengthen co-operation between the competent migration offices and police departments and between the corresponding civilian authorities.

43. On the basis of presumption or established facts, to report any violations to the Verification and Control Commission, with sufficient evidence to enable it to carry out the necessary investigation and submit such conclusions and recommendations as it may consider useful.

***Section 8. COMMITMENTS WITH REGARD TO DIRECT COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEMS***

44. To establish a regional communications system which guarantees timely liaison between the competent government, civilian and military authorities, and with the Verification and Control Commission, with a view to preventing incidents.

45. To establish joint security commissions in order to prevent incidents to settle disputes between neighbouring States.

...

## PART II Commitments with Regard to Execution and Follow-up

...

3. The mechanisms established in the Act shall have the following composition, structure and functions:

...

B. Verification and Control Commission for Security Matters

(a) Composition

- The Commission shall be composed of Four Commissioners, representing four States of recognized impartiality having a genuine interest in contributing to the solution of the Central American crisis, proposed by the Contadora Group and accepted by the Parties.

- A Latin American Executive Secretary, with technical and administrative duties, proposed by the Contadora Group and accepted by common agreement by the Parties, who shall be responsible for the ongoing operation of the Commission.

(b) Functions

For the performance of its functions, the Commission shall have an International Corps of Inspectors, provided by the member States of the Commission and co-ordinated by a Director of Operations.

The International Corps of Inspectors shall carry out the functions assigned to it by the Commission, with the ways and means that the Commission determines or establishes in its rules of procedure.

The International Corps of Inspectors shall have at its disposal all the resources in personnel and finances, as decided by the Commission, necessary to ensure the strict observance of the commitments on security matters. Its proceedings shall be prompt and thorough.

The Parties obligate themselves to give the Commission all necessary co-operation in facilitating and discharging its responsibilities.

For the purpose of collaborating in the performance of the functions of the Commission, the latter shall have an Advisory Body consisting of one representative of each Central American State and having the following duties:

1. To serve as a liaison between the Verification and Control Commission and the Parties.

2. To help in the fulfillment of the duties assigned to the Verification and Control Commission.

3. To co-operate, at the request of the Commission, in the swift resolution of incidents or controversies.

The Commission may invite a representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations and a representative of the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States to participate in its meetings as observers.

The Commission may establish auxiliary bodies and seek the assistance and collaboration of any Mixed Commissions that may exist.

(c) Functions of the Commission

The function of the Commission shall be to ensure compliance with the commitments assumed concerning security matters. To that end it shall:

- Verify that the commitments concerning military manoeuvres provided for in this Act are complied with.

- Ascertain that no more military materiel is acquired and that military forces are not increased, in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 19 (a) of chapter III of this Act.

- Receive simultaneously from the Parties their respective current inventories of armaments and military installations and their census of troops under arms in accordance with the provisions of subparagraph (b) of the FIRST STAGE in paragraph 19 of Part I, chapter III of this Act.

- Carry out the technical studies provided for in subparagraph (c) of the FIRST STAGE in paragraph 19 of Part I, chapter III of this Act.

- Ascertain that the Parties comply fully with the maximum limits that were previously established or are provisionally in effect for the various categories of armaments, military installations and troops under arms and with the reduction timetables agreed upon or provisionally in effect.

- Ascertain that the munitions, spare parts, and replacement equipment acquired are compatible with the inventories and registers submitted previously by the Parties and with the limits and schedules agreed upon or provisionally in effect.

- Verify that no new weapons are introduced which qualitatively or quantitatively alter current inventories, and that weapons prohibited in this Act are not introduced, possessed, or used.

- Establish a register of all transfers of weapons carried out by the Parties, including donations and any other transfers of war materiel.

- Verify the fulfillment of the commitment by the States Parties to initiate and complete constitutional procedures for signing, ratifying or acceding to the treaties and other international agreements on disarmament and to proceed with the actions directed to that end.

- Receive simultaneously from the Parties the list of foreign military bases, schools and installations and verify their dismantlement, in accordance with the provisions of this Act.

- Receive the consensus of foreign military advisers and other foreign elements participating in military and security activities and verify their withdrawal in accordance with the recommendations of the Verification and Control Commission.

- Verify compliance with this Act in respect of traffic in arms and consider any reports of non-compliance. For that purpose the following criteria shall be taken into account:

  (1) Origin of the arms traffic: port or airport of embarkation of the weapons, munitions, equipment or other military supplies intended for the Central American region.

(2) Personnel involved: persons, groups or organizations participating in the organization and conduct of the traffic in arms, including the participation of Governments or their representatives.

(3) Type of weapons, munitions, equipment or other military supplies; category and calibre of weapon; country in which they were manufactured; country of origin; and the quantities of each type of weapon, munitions, equipment or other military supplies.

(4) Extraregional means of transport: land, maritime or air transport, including nationality.

(5) Extraregional transport routes: indicating the traffic routes used, including stops or intermediate destinations.

(6) Places where weapons, munitions, equipment and other military supplies are stored.

(7) Intraregional traffic areas and routes: description of the areas and routes, participation of governmental or other sectors in the conduct of the traffic in arms; frequency of use of these areas and routes.

(8) Intraregional means of transport: determination of the means of transport used; ownership of these means; facilities means; facilities provided by Governments, governmental and other sectors; and other means of delivery.

(9) Receiving unit or units for which the arms are destined: determination of the persons, groups or organizations to whom the arms traffic is destined.

Verify compliance with this Act with regard to irregular forces and the non-use of their own territory in destabilizing actions against another State, and consider any report in that connection.

To that purpose, the following criteria should be taken into account:

(1) Installations, means, bases, camps or logistic and operational support facilities for irregular forces, including command centres, radiocommunications centres and radio transmitters.

(2) Determination of propaganda activities or political, material, economic or military support for actions directed against any State of the region.

(3) Identification of persons, groups and governmental sectors involved in such actions.

- Verify compliance with the commitments concerning terrorism, subversion and sabotage contained in this Act.

- The Commission and the States Parties may request as they deem convenient the assistance of the International Committee of the Red Cross to help solve humanitarian problems that affect the Central American countries.

(d) Norms and procedures

- The Commission shall receive any duly substantiated report concerning violations of the security commitments assumed under this Act, shall communicate it to the Parties involved and shall initiate such investigations as it deems appropriate.

- It shall also be empowered to carry out, on its own initiative the investigations it deems appropriate. The Commission shall carry out its investigations by making on-site inspections, gathering testimony and using any other procedure which it deems necessary for the performance of its functions.

- Above and beyond its quarterly and special reports, the Commission shall, in the event of any reports of violations or of non-compliance with the security commitments of this Act, prepare a report containing recommendations addressed to the Parties involved.

- The Commission shall be accorded every facility and prompt and full co-operation by the Parties for the appropriate performance of its functions. It shall also ensure the confidentiality of all information elicited or received in the course of its investigations.

- The Commission shall transmit its reports and recommendations to the States Parties and to the Governments of the Contadora Group on a confidential basis. It may take them public when it considers that that would contribute to full compliance with the commitments contained in the Act.

(e) Rules of procedure

- After the Commissior. is established, it shall draw up its own rules of procedure in consultation with the States Parties.

(f) Duration of mandate of the Commissioners

- The representatives of the member States of the Commission shall have an initial mandate of two years, extendable by common agreement among the Parties, and the States participating in the Commission.

(g) Establishment

- The Commission shall be established at the time when the Act is signed.

## *Annex B*

# Esquipulas II Agreement

### Procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America

### PREAMBLE

We, the Presidents of the Republics of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, meeting at Guatemala City on 6 and 7 August, encouraged by the far-sighted and unfailing determination of the Contadora Group and the Support Group to achieve peace, strengthened by the steady support of all the Governments and peoples of the world, their main international organizations and, in particular, the European Economic Community and His Holiness John Paul II, drawing inspiration from the Esquipulas I Summit Meeting and having come together in Guatemala to discuss the peace plan presented by the Government of Costa Rica, have agreed as follows:

To take up fully the historical challenge of forging a peaceful destiny for Central America;

To commit ourselves to the struggle for peace and the elimination of war;

To make dialogue prevail over violence and reason over hatred;

To dedicate these peace efforts to the young people of Central America whose legitimate aspirations to peace and social justice, freedom and reconciliation have been frustrated for many generations;

To take the Central American Parliament as the symbol of the freedom and independence of the reconciliation to which we aspire in Central America.

We ask the international community to respect and assist our efforts. We have our own approaches to peace and development but we need help in making them a reality. We ask for an international response which will guarantee development so that the peace we are seeking can be a lasting one. We reiterate firmly that peace and development are inseparable.

We thank President Vinicio Cerezo Arévalo and the noble people of Guatemala for having hosted this meeting. The generosity of the President and people of Guatemala were decisive in creating the climate in which the peace agreements were adopted.

**PROCEDURE FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A FIRM AND LASTING PEACE IN CENTRAL AMERICA**

The Governments of the Republics of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras and Nicaragua, determined to achieve the principles and purposes of the Charter of the United Nations, the Charter of the Organization of American States, the Document of Objectives, the Caraballeda Message for Peace, Security and Democracy in Central America, the Guatemala Declaration, the Punta del Este Communiqué, the Panama Message, the Esquipulas Declaration and the draft Contadora Act of 6 June 1986 on Peace and Co-operation in Central America, have agreed on the following procedure for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America.

**1. NATIONAL RECONCILIATION**

(a) Dialogue

Wherever deep divisions have taken place within society, the Governments agreed to urgently undertake actions of national reconciliation which permit popular participation, with full guarantees, in genuine democratic political processes on the basis of justice, freedom and democracy and, to that end, to create mechanisms permitting a dialogue with opposition groups in accordance with the law.

To this end, the Governments in question shall initiate a dialogue with all the domestic political opposition groups which have laid down their arms and those which have availed themselves of the amnesty.

(b) Amnesty

In each Central American country, except those where the International Verification and Follow-up Commission determines this to be unnecessary, amnesty decrees shall be issued which establish all necessary provisions guaranteeing the inviolability of life, freedom in all its forms, property and security of person of those of whom such decrees are applicable. Simultaneously with the issue of amnesty decrees, the irregular forces of the countries in question shall release anyone that they are holding prisoner.

(c) National Reconciliation Commission

To verify fulfilment of the commitments with regard to amnesty, a cease-fire, democratization and free elections entered into by the five Central American Governments in signing this document, a National Reconciliation Commission shall be set up in each country, responsible for verifying genuine implementation of the process of national reconciliation and also unrestricted respect for all civil and political rights of Central American citizens guaranteed in this document.

The National Reconciliation Commission shall be composed of a representative of the executive branch and his alternate; a representative and an alternate proposed by the Conference of Bishops and chosen by the Government from a list of three bishops. This list shall be submitted within 15 days following receipt of the formal invitation. Governments shall make this invitation within five working days following the signing of this document. The same procedure of proposing three candidates shall be used to choose a representative and an alternate representative of legally registered opposition political parties. The list of three candidates shall be submitted within the same period as indicated above. Each Central American Government shall also choose an eminent citizen belonging to neither the Government nor the government party, and his alternate, to serve on the Commission. The agreement or decree setting up the corresponding National Commission shall be communicated immediately to the other Central American Governments.

## 2. APPEAL FOR AN END TO HOSTILITIES

The Governments make an urgent appeal that, in those States of the region where irregular or insurgent groups are currently active, agreement be reached to end hostilities. The Governments of those States undertake to take all necessary steps, in accordance with the constitution, to bring about a genuine cease-fire.

## 3. DEMOCRATIZATION

The Governments undertake to promote an authentic democratic process that is pluralistic and participatory, which entails the promotion of social justice and respect for human rights, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and the right of every nation to choose, freely and without outside interference of any kind, its own economic, political and social system. They shall adopt, in a way that can be verified, measures conducive to the establishment and, where appropriate, improvement of democratic, representative and pluralistic systems that will guarantee the organization of political parties and effective popular participation in the decision-making process and ensure that the various currents of opinion have free access to fair and regular elections based on the full observance of citizens' rights. In order to ensure good faith in the implementation of this process of democratization, it shall be understood that:

(a) There must be complete freedom of television, radio and the press. This complete freedom shall include freedom for all ideological groups to launch and operate communication media and to operate them without prior censorship;

(b) Complete pluralism of political parties must be established. Political groupings shall, in this connection, have broad access to the communication media and full enjoyment of the rights of association and the power to hold public demonstrations in unrestricted exercise of the right to publicize their ideas orally, in writing and on television, and members of political parties shall enjoy freedom of movement in campaigning for political support;

(c) Likewise, those Central American Governments which are currently imposing a state of siege or emergency shall revoke it, ensuring that a state of law exists in which all constitutional guarantees are fully enforced.

**4. FREE ELECTIONS**

Once the conditions inherent in any democracy have been created, free, pluralistic and fair elections shall be held.

As a joint expression by the Central American States of their desire for reconciliation and lasting peace for their peoples, elections will be held for the Central American Parliament proposed in the Esquipulas Declaration of May 25, 1986.

In the above connection, the Presidents expressed their willingness to move ahead with the organization of the Parliament. To that end, the Preparatory Commission for the Central American Parliament shall complete its deliberations and submit the corresponding draft treaty to the Central American Publishers within 150 days.

Elections shall be held simultaneously in all the countries of Central America in the first six months of 1988, at a date to be agreed in due course by the Presidents of the Central American States. They shall be subject to supervision by the corresponding electoral bodies, and the Governments concerned undertake to invite the Organization of American States, the United Nations and the Governments of third States to send observers to verify the electoral process has been governed by the strictest rules of equal access for all political parties to the communication media and by ample opportunities for organizing public demonstrations and any other type of political propaganda.

With a view to enabling the elections to the Central American Parliament to be held within the period indicated, the treaty establishing the Parliament shall be submitted for approval or ratification in the five countries.

Once the elections for the Central American Parliament have been held, equally free and democratic elections for the appointment of popular representatives to municipalities, congress, the legislative assembly and the office of the President of the Republic shall be held in each country, with international observers and the same guarantees, within the established time-limits and subject to time tables to be proposed in accordance with each country's current constitution.

## 5. TERMINATION OF AID FOR IRREGULAR FORCES AND INSURRECTIONIST MOVEMENTS

The Governments of the five Central American States shall request Governments of the region and Governments from outside the region which are providing either overt or covert military, logistical, financial or propaganda support, in the form of men, weapons, munitions and equipment, to irregular forces or insurrectionist movements to terminate such aid; this is vital if a stable and lasting peace is to be attained in the region.

The above does not cover aid for the repatriation or, failing that, the relocation and necessary assistance with reintegration into normal life of former members of such groups or forces. The Central American Governments shall also request the irregular forces and insurgent groups operating in Central America to refrain from receiving such aid in order to demonstrate a genuine spirit of Latin Americanism. The requests shall be made pursuant to the provisions of the Document of Objectives which calls for eliminating the traffic in arms, whether within the region or from outside it, intended for persons, organizations or groups seeking to destabilize the Governments of Central American countries.

## 6. NON-USE OF TERRITORY TO ATTACK OTHER STATES

The five countries signing this document reiterate their commitment to prevent the use of their own territory by persons, organizations or groups seeking to destabilize the Governments of Central American countries and to refuse to provide them with or allow them to receive military and logistical support.

## 7. NEGOTIATIONS ON SECURITY, VERIFICATION AND THE CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF WEAPONS

The Governments of the five Central American States, with the Contadora Group acting as mediator, shall continue negotiating on the points outstanding in the draft Contadora Act on Peace and Co-operation in Central America with regard to security, verification and control.

These negotiations shall also cover measures for disarming irregular forces prepared to avail themselves of amnesty decrees.

## 8. REFUGEES AND DISPLACED PERSONS

The Central American Governments undertake to attend, as a matter of urgency, to the flows of refugees and displaced persons caused by the crisis in the region, providing them with protection and assistance, particularly in the areas of health, education, work and safety, and to facilitate their repatriation, resettlement or relocation provided that this is voluntary and carried out on an individual basis.

They also undertake to seek assistance from the international community for Central American refugees and displaced persons, to be provided either directly, through bilateral or multilateral agreements, or indirectly, through the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other organizations and agencies.

## 9. CO-OPERATION, DEMOCRACY AND FREEDOM FOR PEACE AND DEVELOPMENT

In the climate of freedom guaranteed by democracy, the Central American countries shall adopt such agreements as will help to speed up development, in order to make their societies more egalitarian and free from misery.

The strengthening of democracy entails creating a system of economic and social well-being and justice. To achieve these goals, the Governments shall jointly seek special economic assistance from the international community.

## 10. INTERNATIONAL VERIFICATION AND FOLLOW-UP

(a) International Verification and Follow-up Commission

An International Verification and Follow-up Commission shall be established consisting of the Secretary-General of the Organization of American States, or his representative, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, or his representative, and the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Central America, the Contadora Group and the Support Group. This Commission shall be responsible for verifying and monitoring fulfilment of the commitments set forth in this document.

(b) Support and facilities for reconciliation and verification and follow-up bodies

In order to reinforce the efforts of the International Verification and Follow-up Commission, the Governments of the five Central American States shall issue statements of support for its work. All nations interested in promoting the cause of freedom, democracy and peace in Central America may adhere to these statements.

The five Governments shall provide all necessary facilities for the proper conduct of the verification and follow-up functions of the National Reconciliation Commission in each country and the International Verification and Follow-up Commission.

## 11. TIMETABLE FOR FULFILMENT OF COMMITMENTS

Within a period of 15 days from the signing of this document, the Central American Ministers for Foreign Affairs shall meet as an Executive Commission to regulate, encourage and facilitate compliance with the agreements contained in this document and to organize working commissions so that, as of that date, the processes leading to fulfilment of the agreed commitments within the stipulated periods can be set in motion by means of consultations, negotiations and any other mechanisms which are deemed necessary.

Ninety days after the signing of this document, the commitments with regard to amnesty, a cease-fire, democratization, termination of aid to irregular forces or insurrectionist movements, and the non-use of territory to attack other States, as defined in this document, shall enter into force simultaneously and be made public.

One hundred and twenty days after the signing of this document, the International Verification and Follow-up Commission shall review the progress made in complying with the agreements set forth in this document.

## FINAL PROVISIONS

The elements set forth in this document form a harmonious and indivisible whole. By signing it, the Central American States accept in good faith the obligation to comply simultaneously with what has been agreed within the established time-limits.

We, the Presidents of the five Central American States, having the political will to respond to our peoples' desire for peace, sign this document at Guatemala City on 7 August 1987.

(Signed) OSCAR ARIAS SANCHEZ
President
Republic of Costa Rica

(Signed) JOSÉ NAPOLEON DUARTE
President
Republic of El Salvador

(Signed) VINICIO CEREZO ARÉVALO
President
Republic of Guatemala

(Signed) JOSÉ AZCONA HOYO
President
Republic of Honduras

(Signed) DANIEL ORTEGA SAAVEDRA
President
Republic of Nicaragua

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